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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 24 September 1992, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. GANEV	(Bulgaria)
later:	Mr. MOUMIN (Vice-President)	(Comoros)
later:	Mr. GANEV (President)	(Bulgaria)
later:	Mr. MOUMIN (Vice President)	(Comoros)

- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations [111] (*continued*)

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- Address by Mr. Milan Kucan, President of the presidency of the Republic of Slovenia

- General debate [9] (continued)

  Address by Mr. Jules Rattankoemar Ajodhia, Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname

  Statements made by

  Sheikh Salem Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah (Kuwait)
  Mr. Claes (Belgium)

  Address by Mr. James Brendan Bolger, Prime Minister of New Zealand

  Statements made by

  Mr. Papaconstantinou (Greece)
  Mr. Taveras Guzman (Dominican Republic)
  Mr. Lumbi Okongo (Zaire)
  Mr. Kijiner (Marshall Islands)
  Mr. Gassymov (Azerbaijan)

- Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments [17]

  (a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: report of the Fifth Committee (Part I)

The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 111 (continued)

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/47/442/Add.3)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to document A/47/442/Add.3, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General informing me that since the issuance of his communications dated 15, 18 and 22 September 1992 Chad has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

ADDRESS BY MR. MILAN KUCAN, PRESIDENT OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the presidency of the Republic of Slovenia.

Mr. Milan Kucan, President of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, His Excellency Mr. Milan Kucan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President KUCAN (spoke in Slovenian; English text furnished by the delegation): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the friendly nation of Bulgaria on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. We are convinced that under your leadership the General Assembly will be successful. I should also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Samir Shihabi, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, for the creative and constructive manner in which he guided the forty-sixth session.

A number of newly independent European States, including Slovenia, have become new Members of the United Nations and are taking part in this session of the General Assembly. This reality, until recently almost beyond imagination in the context of the traditional view of international relations, came about through the process of democratization, which dramatically brought to a close the period of absolute ideologies that formed the basis of various forms of authoritarianism and totalitarianism.

The far-reaching changes brought about by the end of the cold war have confronted the international community and the United Nations with new problems. The futility of attempts to solve the Yugoslav crisis and to stop the war against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which in all its tragic dimensions is taking place in our immediate neighbourhood, is another indication of the insufficiency of current institutional arrangements in the world. This applies both to the United Nations and to regional organizations that complement the universality of the United Nations.

Our international institutional arrangements were made in the circumstances of a world divided into political and military blocs. The primary function of those arrangements was to palliate the effects of ideological, political and military confrontation by maintaining a balance of power and a balance of fear and through understandings reached between the great Powers. In the context of such a world order, there was insufficient commitment to enhancing cooperation and integration, to facilitating the necessary evolution of the modern world as required by the nature of

(President Kucan)

technology, to the organization of production, to free markets, to the responsibility for coordinated and accelerated economic development, to overcoming poverty, to the protection of the human environment and to the universalization of communications and information.

(President Kucan)

The process of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which on the international scene in Europe complements the United Nations system on a regional level and whose documents helped the wave of democratic changes in Europe was, to a large extent, created with the objective of accelerating cooperation and integration. The CSCE was constructed and developed on the basic principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and which constitute a vital precondition for the security, peace, welfare and progress of all. All CSCE participating States were therefore expected to agree voluntarily to those principles in their own interest. However, the CSCE was left without suitable means to respond to situations in which a State violated and did not respect those principles and norms.

The war in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and all the horrors which, thanks to the media, are known to the whole world, as well as the Balkan crisis, in which we were also involved, are an important experience for the CSCE, for the United Nations and for the world at large.

It teaches us that it is relatively simple to plead for peace. It is much more difficult to guarantee security and to create the stable conditions that would allow urgent and peaceful changes in accordance with the principles upholding peace, security and prosperity. This is the most important function of the United Nations and of all regional organizations and is the basis of our support for the proposal that the United Nations should rapidly create mechanisms for adjusting to emerging changes in the world.

In his report "An Agenda for Peace", the Secretary-General has made an exceptionally cogent contribution to efforts to ensure the gradual establishment of security machinery that will enable the peaceful settlement of all disputes, primarily through an insight into the circumstances and the timely mobilization of international institutions, to prevent or quickly cut short armed conflicts between States Members of the United Nations and between sovereign States. It is in the interest of the international community that a war, if it occurs, does not spread to new regions and countries. The report contains many useful ideas about the building of peace after the conflict has been brought to an end and about when it becomes possible and necessary to create conditions for long-term security and stability in relations between the participants in the conflict.

The United Nations may establish machinery which will enable it to intervene speedily to help the democratization of international and internal relations and implementation of self-determination and thus prevent lapsing into the kind of violence that is now tragically escalating in the Balkans.

The United Nations has in the past been a forum for achieving the self-determination of many peoples. As such it was supported by Slovenia which, through its active role in the Allied anti-fascist coalition as part of former Yugoslavia, was among the Founding Members of the Organization. It is therefore understandable that we expect the United Nations to continue in this role the future.

The world Organization has ever more Members. This is not the result or expression of some incomprehensible process of fragmentation: it is an expression of democratization of relations within those non-traditional States which were built not on the principle of national equality and the real common interest of their nations but on ideologies, on fear of bloc threats. In these multi-national States the levers of integration were not economic success and respect for the welfare and dignity of man, but rather

(President Kucan)

monopolistic ideologies and a unitary party and army. In these States the interests and dignity of people and nations were mainly subordinated to the interests of the State and party or its apparatus.

States such as Yugoslavia which, from a historical point of view, were artificial creations should have constantly re-examined and demonstrated their raison d'être in the light of changing historical circumstances. Their disintegration is not a priori in contradiction with the logic and needs of integration. It is part of the same process. Individual nations enter the process of integration at different points. With the formation of their own States, they create the conditions necessary in order to enter the process of their own free will.

We cannot exclude the possibility that new links and cooperation among States will emerge. It is essential that such links must first conform to the principles of international law, democracy, and respect for universally recognized standards for the protection of human rights and the rights of minorities and nations.

The trend of the pre-modern world was towards the concentration of power through the conquest of territory and war. The trend of the modern world is increasingly economic through cooperation and association, through improvement of the quality of life and respect for natural limitations - trends which were at least partly defined at the recent world ecological summit. Slovenia is situated in an area where the pre-modern and modern worlds meet in both perception and in practice. It is in the interest of the United Nations and of all nations of the modern world, so that the modern world will border only on the modern world.

(President Kucan)

Allow me to suggest that after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the democratization of Eastern Europe, the democratic world did not respond with as much commitment as it did, justifiably, in the introduction of the values of democracy and the market economy. The world was insufficiently prepared for this epochal event. It is only now seeking and implementing models and mechanisms for overcoming and preventing the deterioration of relations between some of the new States. The London Conference, which tried to pave the way towards a political solution of the Balkan crisis, was a successful expression of this common search.

The denial to the so-called Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - Serbia and Montenegro - of participation in the General Assembly of the United Nations, a move that was supported by Slovenia, is convincing proof that the United Nations is capable of showing the necessary decisiveness in order to condemn the States that flagrantly violate the United Nations Charter and, above all, peace, security and human rights.

After the final defeat and withdrawal of the Yugoslav army from Slovenia a year ago, armed conflicts flared up ever further from Slovenia. In the process of seeking a solution, Slovenia has worked as a constructive and objective participant in the Peace Conference on Yugoslavia, unselfishly presided over by Lord Carrington, and now the London Conference, to which it is currently committed. Our most immediate and most direct interest is in the solution of humanitarian problems and, in particular, the situation of the more than 70,000 refugees in our country. Our other basic interest relates to the settlement of all issues of State succession of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It goes without saying that our ultimate objective is the establishment of a durable peace in the Balkans.

Slovenia is not in dispute with any of the nations of the former Yugoslavia. In accordance with the decisions of the London Conference, we support measures against the policies of Serbia and Montenegro and we oppose their attempt to usurp the succession of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It is not hard to see that it was the recent policies of these two republics, which today go by the name of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, that caused the disintegration of Yugoslavia, by enforced domination over the others, by a reinforcement of a centralist and undemocratic political system, and by force and seizure; later by war, territorial conquest, "ethnic cleansing", concentration camps and other crimes which must be the subject of judicial investigation and trial; and finally by contempt for all the civilized values that form the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and key documents of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

The Helsinki Final Act is undoubtedly one of those invaluable codes of behaviour - a guide to the development of human rights, respect for borders and their openness and the protection of minorities - which, through general respect, regulate the process of the democratization of relations between nations and States in a peaceful framework.

The authorities of the former Yugoslavia did not really accept the Helsinki principles. They did not believe that signing the document bound them to respect them. The tragedy in the Balkans would not have occurred had the Helsinki principles been respected and implemented in the former Yugoslavia. It could have been avoided. Even once it had started, it could have been resolved peacefully precisely by respecting the Helsinki principles - with the understanding that this might affect the political map of Europe. Such understanding would have prevented the damage, as well as the simplifications and justifications that frequently attribute the crisis in the Balkans, and similar situations elsewhere, to irrational nationalist passion, nationalist animosities, tribalism and the like.

Slovenia chose independence with its implementation of the right to self-determination. Slovenia proposed the peaceful dissolution of Yugoslavia in the manner advocated by Russia at the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when Russia supported the independence of all the republics of the former Soviet Union.

Slovenia does not oppose modern movements towards integration. It supports them provided they are based, like the European Community, on respect for the interests of all those involved, and on equal cooperation and agreement. Slovenia wishes to join the European Community and is prepared voluntarily to surrender such parts of its sovereignty as all members of the European Community must surrender. Slovenia does not wish this only because of its need for economic integration, but also because of its historical affiliation with that culture, which was interrupted by catastrophic ideological, political and economic divisions after the Second World War.

Ensuring durable international peace and security requires the fulfilment of certain conditions, among which respect for human rights is of critical significance. Those States that do not respect human dignity and human rights at home will not respect the dignity and sovereignty of other nations and other States. It is evident that threats to international peace very often start with violations of human rights within the boundaries of countries which later disturb the peace.

The Republic of Slovenia attaches great importance to concern for the implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. As a new, sovereign State, it is strongly committed to the view that in our times State sovereignty is primarily defined by criteria of the legitimacy of State authority and respect for human rights. This is due above all to the practical importance of human rights as a guarantee of social stability and peace and thus as an important constituent of international peace and security.

At a time when the setting of international standards in the field of human rights is being completed, concern for the effectiveness of their implementation and of international supervision is of high priority. Experience has shown that assuring respect for human rights, including especially the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, is of critical importance for extinguishing crises and establishing peace. Efforts at post-conflict peace-building will be precarious and incomplete if that condition for stabilization is not fulfilled and supervised. The Secretary-General also fully stresses this in his important report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277).

There is one further question which highlights the need to review the suitability of institutional arrangements. This is the problem of refugees, as demonstrated in the war against Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is clear that an arrangement meeting the need to protect the personal status and integrity of an individual forced to abandon his country through fear of political and physical violence is inadequate for a mass exodus of entire nations fleeing threatened genocide as a result of a war of conquest and the "ethnic cleansing" of territory conquered by an aggressor.

A million Muslim refugees from the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina are without adequate protection and without an internationally guaranteed status. They are ever more widely scattered throughout Europe. There are close to 100,000 in my own country, which is, with great difficulty, providing them with food and shelter. The Bosnian Muslims are becoming a nation without a land, without a State, with all the attendant tragic consequences, including repercussions for the protection of Europe against terrorism. It is of such hopelessness that terrorism is born. It is tragic that in this war against a State Member of the United Nations, composed of three nations, Croats, Muslims and Serbs, the Muslims should remain almost unprotected. That is why they seek refuge throughout Europe.

At a number of international conferences we have proposed that United Nations peace-keeping forces create a safe haven in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself, where the relative safety of refugees would be assured, since, after the war, when decisions are made on the fate of that State, the Muslims must be present and active, physically and politically. The division of the State would otherwise become a reality. It would also be a reality that aggression had been rewarded by the allocation of conquered territory and that the world had recognized the policy of *fait accompli* and shut its eyes to violations of the principles of humanitarian rights, and to the perpetration of genocide.

Of equal importance is an effective mechanism for prompt action in the resolution of humanitarian problems created by armed conflict. It is particularly important that the humanitarian assistance - in which the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its Executive Director, Mr. James Grant, and Under-Secretary-General Jan Eliasson have invested so much effort - be provided in a timely manner. The importance of humanitarian measures, even if they require overcoming resistance and military protection, has been demonstrated recently in some of the armed conflicts of the past year, including the conflicts in the Gulf and in the Balkans. Inability to guarantee humanitarian assistance is inexcusable and compromises the international community and, unfortunately, the United Nations.

(President Kucan)

In a period of eased international relations and a search for new orientations for development, there is an important way in which the potential role of the United Nations has been extended: in preventive diplomacy and the creation of measures which are a real contribution to defusing conflicts, dealing with their underlying causes and overcoming their consequences. Preventive diplomacy is a task for the future; it will require supplementing and reinforcing the work of the United Nations. It presupposes a knowledge of history and respect for the principles of the equality and self-determination of all peoples, and for other principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations. In their own interests and in the common interest, the Members of the United Nations will have to fulfill those principles. Only thus will the authority of the United Nations be enhanced and protected, and the hope which people, including the people of Slovenia, have invested in it be justified.

The United Nations has alleviated, as far as it could, the negative effects of bloc rivalries and the bipolar division of the world. Now, the world needs a United Nations which is capable of guiding, harmonizing and assisting change. This can be achieved only if the Organization can revitalize, restructure and democratize its own system. We are firmly convinced that the United Nations, as a universal forum of multilateralism, will successfully take this unique opportunity to lay the foundations for a new and more just world, in building which the entire international community shares a common interest.

(President Kucan)

I have devoted a great deal of attention to the crisis in the Balkans. I should like, however, to stress that the Republic of Slovenia is also well aware of other problems that beset the world, and that it has a constructive approach to the important aspects of an international world order that will not be burdened by war, poverty, illiteracy, intolerance, and injustice; of an order in which the Declaration of the World Summit on Children and the achievements of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro will be implemented in full; and of an order in which human rights will everywhere be the standard of behaviour respected by States. Constructive and successful dialogue among developed and developing countries - as well as peace, international security, and disarmament - are among our priority tasks. I wish the the United Nations every success - success the world badly needs.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the presidency of the Republic of Slovenia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Milan Kucan, President of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS BY MR. JULES RATTANKOEMAR AJODHIA, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname.

Mr. Jules Rattankoemar Ajodhia, Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname, His Excellency Mr. Jules Rattankoemar Ajodhia, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. AJODHIA (Suriname): The delegation of the Republic of Suriname congratulates you most warmly, Sir, upon your election to the presidency of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. You bring to that high post a wealth of experience and dedication, qualities that augur well for a successful accomplishment of the task before us.

Allow us to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Samir Shihabi, for the excellent manner in which he guided the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We wish him well in his future endeavours.

We should like to welcome and congratulate the Secretary-General of the United Nations on his assumption of that lofty and equally responsible office. He has assumed the leadership of the Organization at a very difficult and crucial time marked by many political changes, a time at which greater involvement of the Organization in international affairs is demanded. We wish the Secretary-General well and assure him of our fullest cooperation.

I take this opportunity to welcome into the United Nations the newly independent States of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Georgia. I should also like to welcome San Marino, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia.

As reported to the General Assembly on previous occasions, for many years Suriname experienced a domestic armed struggle that brought sorrow and mourning to our people and restricted our possibilities for development. We now wish to inform the Assembly that, through patient negotiations, our efforts have resulted in a recently signed agreement for national reconciliation and development.

From the very beginning, my Government has attached the highest priority to achieving reconciliation in the country, for my Government wishes to realize the full potential of the Surinamese people in harmony with their aspirations for lasting democratic stability. Negotiations were started as part of our conviction that peace should gradually be forged, based on a political understanding of the various forces involved. Moreover, peace can only be reached if negotiations are promoted and conducted in order to yield lasting results for the benefit of our people.

We called in the assistance of the Organization of American States, which, under the auspices of its Secretary-General, Mr. Joao Clemente Baena Soares, provided support in the process of concluding the agreement and in demobilization. Together with his worthy representative, we have succeeded. Concrete results have been achieved, followed by the signing of a substantial agreement based on the crucial need for reconstruction and development and which guarantees respect for human rights.

Today, we rejoice that reconciliation in Suriname is concrete and feasible. It has strengthened our determination to achieve national harmony and national development. We are confident that the Organization of American States will render its valuable support in verifying compliance with the agreement, so as to ensure that the established peace-agreement will be observed.

As this body has been informed, in 1991 democracy was restored in my country, true to the will of the people. Yet, we must not lose sight of the fact that newly restored democracies such as ours are fragile, and depend to a considerable extent on international understanding and support.

My Government has since then made progress in establishing a degree of much-needed political stability, and can now concentrate on finding solutions to the current grave economic crisis, and the potential social crisis, confronting my country. Our socio-economic problems, which have resulted in a sharp decline in production, increased unemployment, sharp price increases and a deteriorating standard of living for the majority of the population, have now compelled us to take serious corrective measures to halt the economic decline and boost economic growth. Experiences throughout the world show that no government can successfully carry out a programme for economic reconstruction and development without the fullest national and international support.

My Government has decided to implement a programme for adjustment, recovery and growth. In this context, we have secured valuable support from the European Community. Furthermore, we can report to this Assembly that development cooperation with the Netherlands has been re-established, and that the signing of the framework treaty for friendship and closer cooperation has added a new dimension to bilateral relations between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Suriname. Thus, we are encouraged because our national development strategy has found a ready response from the international community in this crucial aspect of our democratic process.

(Mr. Ajodhia, Suriname)

I can assure this Assembly, and with some emphasis, that in implementing the adjustment programme our view is that a well-balanced and consistent approach to the social dimensions of the programme is indispensable to its final outcome.

In the past few years, forces of change have transformed the international political arena and profoundly changed the major balance of power that emerged from the Second World War. Antagonisms and hostility between the super-Powers have been replaced by unprecedented joint efforts and partnership. This has facilitated, through dialogue and by peaceful means, the solution of a number of regional conflicts and the settlement of others. We believe that the new political climate has had constructive effects in the world, and has enabled us to define a broader and more fully integrated role in international security.

The international community is experiencing a rebirth of the United Nations after 45 years of existence, for the fullest use is being made of its peacemaking and peace-keeping potential in order to bring about just and lasting peace in several parts of the world. As a result of the new mandate of this reinvigorated Organization, our hopes are being justified that it will not be long before the unfolding dramas of human suffering, exploitation, poverty, fratricide, hunger and malnutrition, and aggressive nationalism will finally be banished from the planet.

Our Organization is facing the challenge and responsibility of bringing about an overall and lasting settlement of various problems on the basis of respect for the rights of all. It must encourage States to adhere to the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant instruments as the best means of protecting and promoting human rights.

We support a just and lasting settlement in Central and Eastern Europe: we are concerned about the growing tensions and conflicts in that region, which endanger international peace and security. We are keeping close track of developments in former Yugoslavia, and take this opportunity to welcome the efforts of our Organization, the London Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement summit.

A just and lasting settlement is necessary on the African continent. we are deeply concerned by the threat from the growing instability in the Horn of Africa caused by the conflict in Somalia. We express regret that, despite the signing of a cease-fire agreement, the parties involved have not abided by their commitments and have thus not permitted the unimpeded distribution of humanitarian assistance to those in need. In this respect, my delegation has endorsed the proposal to convene a conference on the national reconciliation, reconstruction and unity of Somalia which should lead to a peaceful and lasting political settlement of the conflict.

My delegation strongly condemns the tragic escalation of violence in South Africa, which has halted the negotiating process within the framework of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). We strongly urge the South African regime to create a climate that is conducive to peaceful negotiations aimed at an agreement on the text of a new constitution based on a non-racial, democratic and united South Africa.

An overall and lasting settlement is needed for the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine issue. My Government firmly supports the ongoing peace process, which is aimed at reaching a just, comprehensive and durable solution to the question of the Middle East.

(Mr. Ajodhia, Suriname)

We welcome the progress made in reaching overall settlements of the conflicts in Asia, particularly in Cambodia and Afghanistan. The establishment of the transitional Government in Afghanistan is a positive development towards peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction in that country.

We support the efforts of the Secretary-General to reach an agreement on a set of fundamental principles with a view to reaching an overall agreement on the question of Cyprus. With regard to Latin America and the Caribbean, we are pleased to note that the processes of democratization, harmonization, reconciliation and economic integration are gradually bearing fruit.

The agreements between the Government of El Salvador and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front mark the closing of a decade of fratricidal war. They will undoubtedly contribute to lasting peace and stability, which are imperative for the region's development.

We express full support for the struggle of the people of Haiti to restore democracy and respect for human rights in their country, and for the efforts of the Organization of American States towards this end.

As we advance in the decade of the '90s, the economic and social problems of developing countries continue to be manifold. Difficult decisions will therefore be needed to address the issue of international economic adjustment and development in order to eliminate the imbalances between the North and the South.

The worsening of the economic situation and social conditions in many developing countries has led to a decline in the standard of living and to the persistence and increase of widespread poverty. The elimination of hunger and malnutrition, the improvement of health standards and the eradication of illiteracy should be issues of paramount concern in the coming decades. My delegation therefore holds the view that these aims can best be achieved by putting into motion a people-centered development process.

It is in this context that my delegation warmly supports the convening of a Summit for Social Development in order to enable the international community to deal extensively with the complex but most important question of human development.

Though no substantive commitment to new funds was made during the recently held Rio Conference on Environment and Development, it should be noted as an important achievement of the international community that a programme of action, Agenda 21, and the Rio Declaration have been adopted. The Rio Conference has clearly established the close link between environment, growth and development, the primary issues for the international community.

It is as a consequence of the results of the Rio summit that during the current General Assembly special attention must be paid to institutional follow-up of the Rio Conference. In this regard, we attach great importance to the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development. This

(Mr. Ajodhia, Suriname)

Commission must of necessity become the primary and most important forum for consultation and must set the trend for measures to implement Agenda 21 at national, regional and global levels.

Once again I should like to emphasize that in the new international environment the role and function of the United Nations has become universally accepted. We have witnessed an increased interest in multilateralism and a renewal of the relevance of the United Nations and its main bodies. The peacemaking and peace-keeping activities of this world Organization in many regions have, more than at any time in the past, opened prospects for its greatly enhanced role in the maintenance of world peace and security. These activities have proved to be effective procedures, well-suited to present-day realities.

The opportunities offered by the Charter in the fields of preventive diplomacy, fact-finding and good-offices missions should be optimally explored, so as to provide the Secretary-General with a suitable structure for the prevention and timely management of crises and conflicts.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jules Rattankoemar Ajodhia, Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted from the rostrum.

Sheikh Salem Sabah Al-Salem AL-SABAH (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the delegation of the State of Kuwait, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the forty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your election, Sir, reflects an appreciation of your country, Bulgaria, and your personal merits and skills, which will prove instrumental in guiding our deliberations towards the attainment of our common goals. On a bilateral note, it is my privilege to underscore the close ties that exist between our two countries, as shown in numerous concrete steps.

In your current post, you succeed His Excellency Ambassador Samir Shihabi, the Permanent Representative of our sister country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who demonstrated outstanding skills and capabilities in his stewardship of the preceding session. His leadership was effective indeed throughout his term of office. This was no surprise to us, especially as Mr. Shihabi represented a sister country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has made and continues to make generous and sincere contributions, that are appreciated by all, to the promotion of peace and security throughout the world.

It gives me special pleasure to commend the outstanding role played by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, since his assumption of his office at the beginning of this year. The world Organization has now become the true focal point of international relations and the beacon of hope for the peoples of the world.

In less than one year in office, the Secretary-General has demonstrated an impressive ability to face up to the evolving challenges on the world scene, and has managed to address the varying concerns in accordance with the established principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the overall mission of our organization. The Secretary-General's endeavour to redefine the role, function and orientation of the United Nations is characterized by precise thinking and clear vision, resolve and flexibility, both in concept and in enforcement plan, as demonstrated by the set of important recommendations contained in his report "An Agenda for Peace".

In his approach, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali has proved that he truly represents a symbol of the interface and interaction of various human civilizations, a role that his home country, Egypt, has played throughout its long history.

In the same vein, we should not fail to underscore with a deep sense of appreciation the great achievements of the former Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, during his tenure. Mr. Perez de Cuellar should be recognized for his integrity in fulfilling his mandate in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and for his untiring efforts to promote peace on the basis of justice and to enhance the role and effectiveness of the United Nations. Kuwait recognizes with deep appreciation those achievements, salutes Mr. Perez de Cuellar and wishes him success in all he does.

The international scene has undergone fundamental changes over the past two years, the most significant of which has been the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the spread of democratic orientation across Eastern Europe. That, in turn has led to the creation of States and entities that have joined the United Nations membership, thus consolidating further its universality. Kuwait takes this opportunity to extend its sincere congratulations to all those States that have been admitted recently to the United Nations membership. We trust that this new membership of the international community will represent a constructive addition to and consolidation of the edifice of world peace.

(Sheikh Salem Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Kuwait)

As we draw nearer to the twenty-first century, we look forward to the emergence of new roles for the United Nations. The United Nations should not be content with peace-keeping, the ending wars that have broken out, and the defusing of volatile situations. Rather, the United Nations must make a more direct contribution to the containment and defusing of disputes in their early stages - before they erupt into vicious conflicts. It must also shoulder the role of peacemaking.

The United Nations should not be content with ensuring stability, despite the vital importance of that role. It must be a force for ensuring peoples' welfare and the fulfilment of peoples' aspirations. In today's world, the concept of peace transcends the framework of peace between states and embraces the peace of whole societies and peoples.

As we work together on the formulation of the new world order and strive to make it one of the principal stanchions of the stability which we hope will reign in our world and imbue international relations, we are called upon to ensure the rule of international law through the strengthening of the United Nations role and the scrupulous application of its Charter. In our view, this will provide a genuine framework for the new world order and for the achievement of its lofty goals.

Despite the fact that international relations in our world today are anchored in the tenets of the United Nations system, we believe that an effective and viable United Nations should be complemented by a more aggressive role for the regional organizations which would be instrumental in addressing many unresolved disputes and issues. The League of Arab States and the Organization of African Unity, for example, should be entrusted with supporting roles in dealing with the problems of Somalia; the European

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Community should play the leading role in the resolution of the escalating problems in the Balkan region; and the Organization of American States can become the leading player in dealing with the problems of Haiti and El Salvador.

In the context of this desired role for regional organizations the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) stands out, especially through its firm support of Kuwait's struggle to defeat the Iraqi aggression. That unprecedented role of the GCC could perhaps be followed as a model in rallying a larger international effort when necessary.

Kuwait believes that the Non-Aligned Movement, especially in the wake of its recent summit in Jakarta, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as well as the Group of 77, are models of regional organizations whose capabilities should be directed at facilitating the evolution and maintenance of world peace. In this sense, they are natural mini-counterparts of the United Nations, and they represent major dynamic forces that perform a coordinating function among their members.

From this perspective we believe that the efforts undertaken by the United Nations in the liberation of my country, Kuwait, from the Iraqi aggression and occupation could perhaps be perceived as a new approach in the crystallization and enforcement of the concept of collective security, which preoccupied this world body since its inception, and was a hope in the minds of the authors of its Charter. Thus, the Kuwait case established a precedent when it demonstrated that the Security Council's resolutions can be implemented, as, indeed, they must be implemented.

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The Security Council has clearly succeeded in consolidating the underpinnings of peace and the elimination of many hotbeds of conflict in several regions of the world, in the aftermath of its successful moves to ensure the liberation of my country, Kuwait, from an invasion which, by its very nature, represented a challenge to the Charter of the United Nations and to the norms of international law that regulate relations between civilized nations.

However, certain residual results of the Iraqi aggression still exist, and will continue to exist so long as the Iraqi regime persists in its refusal to comply fully with the relevant Security Council resolutions and tries to circumvent those resolutions and to renege on its previous formal commitments. For instance, there are still Kuwaiti and third country prisoners held hostage in Iraqi jails despite the intensive efforts and international pressures deployed to secure their release.

Furthermore, the patently false claims repeatedly made by Iraq, in contravention of international treaties and commitments, continue to shake the parameters of stability throughout the region. Iraqi falsehoods also jeopardize the main objective of the input of the United Nations in providing the technical framework for the Iraq-Kuwait boundary demarcation process. This exercise is a major achievement on the part of the United Nations in regard to security and stability in the region. The Security Council's recently adopted resolution 773 (1992) welcomed the decisions of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission and underlined the Council's guarantee of inviolability of the international border between the

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two countries and its decision to take, as appropriate, all necessary measures to that end, in accordance with the Charter.

Furthermore, Iraq continues to refuse to accept legal responsibility for its plundering of property owned by the Kuwaiti private sector and by Kuwaiti individuals, and continues to refuse to recognize the need to return all stolen property. Iraq also refuses to implement Security Council resolutions 706 (1991) and 712 (1991) regarding the provision of essential humanitarisn needs for the Iraqi civilian population and the payment of its dues to the United Nations compensation fund. In addition, Iraq, under all pretexts, shies away from any businesslike cooperation in regard to the fulfilment of its obligation to disclose all its stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and in regard to the elimination of such weapons.

All of this places a new responsibility on the international community in general to bring further pressure to bear on Iraq, to remain vigilant to its practices and schemes, and to ensure its complete implemention of all the relevant United Nations resolutions. The principle of collective responsibility still stands, and the lessons drawn from that painful and bitter experience should be fully understood and never forgotten.

Kuwait believes that security in the Gulf region is part and parcel of world security. This means that it is essential that all of us respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all the States in our region. It also means non-interference in the internal affairs of those States, as well as the non-use of force or of the threat of force in the settlement of any dispute that may arise between them.

From this premise, we have been following with grave concern the recent developments, with all their remifications, in regard to the Abu Mousa island.

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Al-Sabah, Kuwait)

In our view, these developments will have a direct impact on regional peace and stability. Hence, we are all duty-bound to work towards averting their repercussions so that the good-neighbourly relations that we already have with the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran may be preserved. While we declare our full support for our sister State of the United Arab Emirates, we hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran will abide by the agreement regarding the island of Abu Mousa and will accept the application of international conventions for the peaceful resolution of disputes. We trust that, in the final analysis, prudence and wisdom will reign supreme in regard to this issue.

As of late last year, we have seen a promising peace process under way in regard to the Middle East problem. The new realities and momentum that emerged following the Madrid conference should be maintained, with a view to securing the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) on the basis of the exchange of land for peace.

It has become clear that land and peace are worth any price. The international community has thus a special responsibility to nurture the ongoing peace efforts and to ensure that the current peace talks, in all their aspects and forms, will bring to fruition the efforts that the United Nations has made with a view to guaranteeing the national rights of the Palestinian people - particularly its right to self-determination and statehood - and the complete withdrawal of Israel from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the holy city of Al-Quds. We call upon the United Nations to prompt Israel to abide expeditiously with its obligations under international law and not to squander this historic opportunity.

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The peace process and the attendant efforts should follow an integrated approach in addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict that takes into account the United Nations resolutions regarding the question of Palestine and the Middle East issue. In specific terms, this means that Israel must withdraw from southern Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), and that the Lebanese people must be supported in consolidating their national-reconciliation efforts and in rebuilding their national institutions.

It also means Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian Arab Golan and the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions in order that a just and lasting settlement of this long-running conflict may be reached.

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The ongoing plight of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina gives rise to deep fears and apprehensions throughout the Islamic world and in the world at large. We categorically reject all practices that aim at the liquidation of the identity and existence of a people, a nation and a State on ethnic or religious grounds. We support the struggle of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and demand the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. We call upon the United Nations, along with its specialized agencies, to expand its role there, and we hold that regional organizations, particularly the European ones, should play a more active role in alleviating the suffering of that people. It is our collective responsibility to contain the ramifications of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina before they spill over into neighbouring countries.

If the United Nations has been seized of this tragic issue since the very beginning, then we believe that there are other turbulent areas in the world that deserve active involvement on the part of the United Nations together with the competent regional organizations, with a view to containing and resolving the disputes afflicting those regions. In our view, this is a sound approach to underlining and enhancing the credibility of the United Nations and to defining clearly the parameters of the new world order. We are duty-bound to support both the United Nations and the regional organizations in a concrete fashion that gives real meaning to the concept of common security and stability and the principle of common destiny.

The tragedy of the Somali people is cause for deep concern on our part, given the common values we share with them. The fratricidal strife in Somalia is extremely painful to us. Despite the slight improvement over the past few weeks in the delivery of food and medical supplies and in the control over the

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distribution thereof, Somalia continues to bleed, and it has now become incumbent upon all nations to provide more material assistance to Somalia and to strengthen their support for the Secretary-General in his endeavours to expedite the attainment of a set of noble goals, namely, the protection of an entire people from annihilation and the delivery of adequate supplies of food and medical services to that people.

We in Kuwait, in view of our solidarity with the friendly peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Somalia and in line with our humanitarian obligations and our commitment to alleviate human suffering, have shipped thousands of tons of food, medical supplies and basic human needs to those two countries. Furthermore, we have made direct financial contributions to the relevant specialized agencies in order to ensure their ability to operate in those areas. We shall continue to provide humanitarian relief assistance out of our deep belief in social justice.

We follow with deep concern the persistent instability in Afghanistan and the continuing strife among the partners in the coalition Government. We call upon the Muslim people of Afghanistan to put aside their differences and to move towards national reconciliation. National efforts should in fact focus on building up national stability and security.

Any political breakthroughs made by the United Nations will add to its growing record of achievements. But such accomplishments will remain fragile unless followed by more efforts to promote social stability and economic development, with particular emphasis on health, social services and combating ills of epidemic proportions, especially drug abuse.

Moreover, the United Nations should explore new avenues to ease the foreign debt burden on the developing countries and to try to bridge the gap between wealthy and poor nations by means of a more earnest and constructive dialogue between North and South, with a view to ensuring economic equity anchored in social justice. One of the aims of such dialogue should be confidence-building between donor and recipient nations. Such confidence will lead to joint efforts in a bid to stimulate the inflow of investments with a better economic and social return for both sides. This will indeed be yet another manifestation of an interdependent world community of nations.

It is against this conceptual backdrop that we view the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), known as the "Earth Summit", held recently in Rio de Janiero. The focus of the Rio Conference brought to the fore the growing world-wide interest in gaining a better understanding of the political, economic, and social aspects of human life. Despite the fact that the UNCED did not achieve all its expected goals, one of its major contributions was that it highlighted for the whole world, in an unprecedented manner, the importance of the issue of environment and made it abundantly clear that ecological concerns do indeed transcend both national and regional disputes. It has deepened our sense of belonging to a single "global village".

The current changes and new challenges on the international scene are bound to cause dramatic transformations in many established concepts and assumptions that still dominate international relations. A case in point is the growing interest in the issue of human rights. In an evolving world, not only should human rights be defined in instruments but the concept of human rights should be expanded to include the genuine guarantee of the exercise of those rights to freedoms and human dignity, in addition to the satisfaction of basic human needs and the liberation of man from fear and want. Guaranteeing human rights has become a major demand of today's world and the international community continues to make it clear, time and again, that it will not condone any breech or violation thereof. Respect for State sovereignty should be in consonance with the guaranteeing of human rights.

In conclusion, we note that the recent radical, international changes have placed before the United Nations enormous challenges and responsibilities. The growing confidence in its role and in the need for it to perform its functions make it imperative for all of us to reaffirm our commitment to the world Organization. It would be both unfair and inappropriate for us to keep adding to its responsibilities without providing it with sufficient material and political support to enable it to fulfil its mandates effectively. This means that the international community should put at the United Nations disposal adequate resources and powers, commensurate with its responsibilities.

The Secretary-General has shown that while the United Nations is prepared to discharge its functions, the Member States are in turn expected to honour their obligations in full. This complementarity between the United Nations system and its Members will straighten out the relationship between mandates and resources. Thus we can eliminate the imbalance between what is required and what is available and the potential causes of friction that go with that disequilibrium. Under such circumstances, the world body would be able to live up to the expectations of the international community in the areas of peacemaking and peace-keeping, along with all the attendant profits in terms of stability, security, development, progress and welfare.

Mr. CLAES (Belgium) (interpretation from French): Allow me first of all to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. Through your person, an entire region of the world affirms in this forum its political renewal.

The body of Members of our Organization is growing continually. Over the last year, 21 new States have come to join our ranks and have subscribed to the commitments of the Charter. We bid them welcome. Belgium has always held the view that our Organization should be open to all States. Equally strong, however, is our conviction that expansion should not come to mean shattering and dispersal. National aspirations must remain subordinate to the essential prerequisites of multilateral cooperation, which is becoming more necessary every day.

(Mr. Claes, Belgium)

In this respect, the confidence Belgium placed in the new Secretary-General even before his election has turned out to be fully justified. As proof of this, I would refer to his actions in the former Yugoslavia and in Somalia. I have also in mind his analyses at the Rio Conference, his report on preventive diplomacy and his report to the General Assembly.

My colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom, has already spoken on behalf of the member States of the European Community. This allows me to concentrate my statement on a few issues of particular concern to us.

The end of the cold war made strengthened international cooperation both possible and necessary. For combined reasons of history, size and geographical location, Belgium has always been predisposed to cooperation. Without a credible international order, we will all sooner or later be faced with an upsurge of unilateral demands containing the seeds of inevitable threats to peace. Our membership of the Security Council has enabled us to witness this first hand. A United Nations which functions effectively constitutes the best guarantee against such dangers.

The end of the cold war has produced a variety of results. A wall has fallen but new trenches have been dug. The elimination of global ideological confrontation has led to the easing of regional conflicts that were fuelled by that confrontation. But it has also released frustrations, which have often degenerated into parodies of the right to self-determination and into new conflicts. We must react to this.

Fortunately, the United Nations is no longer paralysed by the automatic ideological antagonisms of the past. The Security Council in particular has regained its means of action and its authority, which is now broadly recognized. Failure to comply with its decisions now equals isolation from the international community.

But precisely because our Organization is experiencing something of a revival, we have to ensure that it does not fall victim to its own success. The summit meeting of the Security Council members, held last January, recognized the extent of this challenge. The Heads of State or Government requested the Secretary-General to develop concrete proposals to respond to it.

The Secretary General's report, "An Agenda for Peace", has given us ample food for thought on the future role of the Organization. The report confirms that our central objective should be peace first and foremost, for without peace, neither normal society nor faith in the future of individuals is possible.

The General Assembly will debate preventive diplomacy in depth. We hold this concept to be based on the following elements: full use of the powers vested in the Secretary-General; a United Nations presence in the initial stages of a potential conflict; the specific role of regional organizations; commissions of inquiry and temporary observer missions; an enlarged role for United Nations staff already present in potential conflict zones; and disarmament and non-proliferation.

Disarmament and non-proliferation continue to merit special attention in their own right. The end of the cold war has made the control and monitoring of conventional weapons more difficult. The nightmare of global nuclear confrontation has given way to the threat of the unchecked proliferation and dissemination of nuclear arms and technology. During the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the 12 countries of the European Community, together with Japan, took an initiative which has led to the creation of a register for multilateral control of the transfer of conventional weapons. That, however, is but a first step.

The case of Iraq has demonstrated the extent of the problems caused by a lack of transparency in commercial transactions involving both conventional and nuclear weaponry. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should therefore continue to improve its system of safeguards, preventive detection and monitoring of the transfer of dual-use items.

I would like to pay a tribute here to the steadfast efforts of the Conference on Disarmament. Belgium currently chairs that Conference and will present to the General Assembly the draft Convention on a ban on chemical-weapons. On behalf of a country victimized by these weapons during the First World War, I want to launch a solemn appeal in favour of the universal acceptance of the draft Convention, resulting in the final elimination of these particularly barbaric weapons from all arsenals.*

A more systematic use of preventive diplomacy would, no doubt, enable us to limit at least the human cost of conflicts. However, it is clear that when prevention reaches its limits, the Organization must be able to resort to other peace-keeping measures.

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* Mr. Moumin (Comoros), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In response to the appeals of the Secretary-General, Belgium, for its part, has dispatched a battalion to Croatia and units to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and is preparing a battalion for deployment in Somalia.

The financial difficulties of our Organization have led us recently to seek alternative financing systems. However, I must take this opportunity to recall the obligation of solidarity that applies to all Member States. All Members must fulfil their budgetary obligations. The system for financing peace-keeping operations should be uniform and predictable, and should resolve the problems of financing the initial phases of urgent operations. The United Nations would obviously lose both operational capacity and credibility if the Organization were denied the budgetary resources corresponding to its responsibilities.

However, all the combined tools of preventive diplomacy, disarmament, non-proliferation and peace-keeping operations are not sufficient to ensure real peace. Most conflicts are more deeply rooted. I wholeheartedly agree with the Secretary-General's broad interpretation of the elements which contribute to ensuring peace. Like him, I believe that the role of the Organization extends to the prevention of tensions of any kind, be they economic disparities, infringements of human rights, the absence of democracy or environmental degradation.

For the first generations of the post-colonial era, the term "North-South dialogue" kept alive the hope of attaining a more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities. The situation today is far from meeting those expectations. This is the combined result of the cold war and military expenditure, of a degree of selfishness in the North, of corruption and bad governance, and of a wrong choice of priorities both in the South and the North.

For these reasons, major bilateral and multilateral aid efforts have sometimes failed and have also maintained a culture of dependency which now demands a process of emancipation. The contrasts between North and South demand our attention more than ever. We are witnessing, on the one hand, a race to satisfy material cravings, and on the other, abject poverty. This is the greatest challenge facing us. We not only have to maintain important resource and technology transfers, but we also need to make a frank analysis of past errors and to identify the real priorities.

In this context two factors have, in my view, become of key importance: first, the concept of global interdependence and, secondly, the growing emphasis on the close links between population, environment and development.

Useful lessons may be drawn from past disappointments concerning donor-recipient relationships. The Assembly will also discuss the triennial policy review of the operational acitivities of the United Nations system. We hope that this will be a thorough debate leading to a genuine reassessment of multilateral aid mechanisms.

For our part, we have launched a number of innovations in our bilateral aid during recent years. These include, in particular, the creation of joint management systems for our development projects, designed to reinforce the decision-making capacity of our partners.

Nevertheless, a real economic take-off will be possible only if investments follow government efforts. We note with satisfaction that a number of developing countries have taken steps to offer greater legal security to foreign investors with respect to freedom of enterprise, fiscal matters and mobility of capital and profits. Such measures contribute to the creation of a beter investment climate.

We have to concern ourselves now more than ever with the social aspects of development. Profit is not a goal in itself. Income redistribution must allow for the full personal development of every individual within a society based on solidarity. This solidarity must extend to future generations. The rights of workers, as well as their families, their cultural heritage and their environment, must therefore be protected. The World Conference on Social Development, to be held in 1995, will provide us an opportunity to give these goals and principles the high priority they deserve.

International economic cooperation can flourish only on the basis of political will and effective mechanisms. This explains the vital importance of several international negotiating processes, either in progress or already being finalized, being brought to a successful conclusion.

I should like to stress Belgium's attachment to the liberalization of world trade as a driving force for economic growth and development. The success of the Uruguay Round is the essential precondition for this.

Finally, the Rio de Janeiro Conference was a milestone in the process of increasing collective awareness of the future of our planet, and Belgium will attach the greatest importance to its follow-up. One of the crucial aspects here concerns the financial mechanisms. We earnestly wish for a strengthening of the structure of the global environment facility to adapt it better to the various needs. This should also contribute to a greater convergence between the international financial institutions of the Bretton Woods system and the operational mechanisms of the United Nations family.

I could not possibly close this part of my statement without mentioning the economic problems of a region to which we feel particularly close, namely Africa. Current events are continually giving us cause for concern. Belgium, however, refuses to give in to visions of catastrophe or what a fashionable phrase defines as "Afro-pessimism".

In recent years Belgium has redefined its attitude and its commitments towards Africa, first in areas where we could have to assume special responsibilities. We warmly welcome the fact that the link between democracy, human rights and development is now widely recognized and applied. We hope that democratization will be understood at its true value, namely, for the benefit of the people. The spirit which inspires us is not that of a new paternalism: we wish to enter into cooperation as equal partners. In order to support political renewal in Africa, my Government has just created a fund to assist in the financing of democratic elections, the main beneficiary of which will be the African continent. Furthermore, Belgium is actively using its influence with its partners and in relevant international institutions to ensure that the dawning of democracy is accompanied by an upturn in economic activity. In the meantime, we have intensified our emergency aid in several areas affected by conflict or natural diasters. My Government also welcomes the fact that, as regards aid to Africa, it has established a fruitful working relationship with Belgian and international non-governmental organizations.

Failure to respect the rights of the individual is another source of tension and violence, as well as an impediment to economic and social progress.

We must clearly reaffirm the principle of the universality of basic rights and freedoms which are inherent in human dignity. These rights cannot be subject to various intepretations.

Respect for and the protection of human rights require stronger monitoring mechanisms. An extraordinary session of the Human Rights Commission took place last month in Geneva. The Commission strongly condemned the serious and intolerable human rights abuses taking places in the former Yugoslavia. Belgium warmly welcomes this rapid reaction and would like to see it serve as an example in the future.

Belgium would also like to see the coming World Conference on Human Rights lead to a reaffirmation of the international commitments by States and a strengthening of cooperation in the world community. We appeal to all countries to strive in a constructive spirit for the success of this Conference.

We are already in favour of a role for the Security Council in certain cases of particularly flagrant or large-scale violations of human rights.

This is why Belgium insisted on having the Council hear Mr. van der Stoel on the human rights situation in Iraq.

This is a delicate subject, as we are well aware. But international law is evolving, and since information has virtually lost its borders, frontiers are fading for injustice as well. Ultimately, States simply have to respect the international comitments they have undertaken as sovereign Powers.

The unbreakable link between democracy and respect for human rights is also put in concrete terms in the United Nations system through the question of electoral assistance. Numerous requests for such assistance are currently being addressed to the Secretariat. In order to give an adequate response, precise standards must be established. The existing mechanisms which allow for some forms of electoral asssistance must be fully used. This session of the General Assembly should enable us to clarify matters where necessary.

The growing number of ethnic conflicts poses a special problem, half-way between the traditional questions of human rights and the exercise of the right to self-determination. Consequently, the protection of ethnic minorities deserves special attention at this time.

In Europe, we continue to believe, in spite of recent disappointments, that the rules developed by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) remain valid. The right to self-determination must in no case be put forward to justify excesses and cruelties committed in its name. Besides, the protection of minorities should not necessarily or indeed exclusively be placed under the banner of self-determination. I wish to repeat what I said in the early part of my statement - for this seems to me to be a fundamental truth: excessive invocation of the principle of self-determination leads straight to a caricature of national sovereignty.

It is necessary therefore to explore viable alternatives: real administrative decentralization, cultural autonomy, federal or confederate systems. The claims of minorities are above all the collective expression of a specific dignity and of human rights which cannot be trodden underfoot or ignored. Once this truth has been admitted, approaches more conciliatory than blind nationalism become possible. This is my hope for the future of the minorities issue.

The current world situation has prompted me to concentrate my reflections around the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security, in the fight against underdevelopment and in the protection of human rights. In none of these fields can we hope to achieve lasting improvements without strengthened regional cooperation.

As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter, in a world very different from the one its authors knew, the need for complementarity between the regional and global spheres has become obvious. We must work to define its modalities. At a time when Belgium is close to the end of its term of membership in the Security Council, I am pleased to note that this debate is taking place - above all as regards the establishment and maintenance of peace.*

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* The President returned to the Chair.

ADDRESS BY MR. JAMES BRENDAN BOLGER, PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Mr. James Brendan Bolger, Prime Minister of New Zealand, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of New Zealand, His Excellency The Right Honourable James Brendan Bolger, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. BOLGER (New Zealand): Mr. President, New Zealand congratulates you on your election to lead the Assembly and offers you its support in your task.

One year ago I stood on this rostrum and spoke about the Gulf crisis and the way in which the United Nations, with strong leadership from the Security Council, had shown a firmness of judgement and a commitment to the ideals of the founders of the United Nations that reinforced the status and authority of the Organization.

I spoke of my own country, New Zealand, a small nation in the south-west Pacific, which supported the United Nations, in keeping with our tradition of opposing tyranny and supporting freedom.

This year I have returned to this Organization even more confident of the vital role of the United Nations in today's world, of the important contribution each nation, be it large or small, can make to the achievement of its ideals. Most important, however, I want to affirm the commitment of New Zealand, a founder member of the United Nations, to ensuring that this Organization adapts to meet the challenge of a world that has changed, is changing and will continue to change in the years ahead. To do that, the

United Nations requires a vibrant, active General Assembly and a Security Council that truly reflects the different regions and the different peoples of the world.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Ghali, has made his views clear in putting before this Assembly his report, "An Agenda for Peace". His message is summed up in paragraphs 75 and 76, where he says:

> "With the cold war ended we have drawn back from the brink of a confrontation that threatened the world and, too often, paralysed our Organization.
>
> "Even as we celebrate our restored possibilities, there is a need to ensure that the lessons of the past ... are learned and that the errors ... are not repeated. For there may not be a third opportunity for our planet ... ." (A/47/277, paras. 75-76)

New Zealand endorses that conclusion.

We can also take hope from the fact that at last both the Security Council and the Assembly have the chance to work as they were originally intended, free from crippling ideological competition. Through the Security Council, and with the support of all the Members of the United Nations, we have seen decisive action to implement collective security measures on a scale never before possible.

There is much still to be done, but no longer need the people of the world despair about impotence and inaction on the part of the United Nations. In Cambodia, in Somalia, in the Balkans, in the Middle East, the United Nations has moved to assist in the vital battle for human survival where before there was only the prospect of continued death and destruction.

(Mr. Bolger, New Zealand)

In our view, the Agenda for Peace will succeed only if we support an agenda for action. This is no time for complacency. The heavy cloud of the cold war has lifted. But over the years that cloud concealed many smaller conflicts and tensions - regional, national and ethnic. Freed from being bottled up by the cold war, a growing and frightening tendency is exposed to settle ancient differences by the use of force.

The Agenda for Peace also reminds us that there are other critical issues which threaten not only the security of Member States but also the future of the planet itself.

Poverty, disease, malnutrition, crippling levels of debt and negligible economic growth are scourges in themselves. They can unleash despair and anger that will destabilize political and social institutions.

Environmental degradation does not threaten only our immediate surroundings and livelihoods; problems such as the depletion of the ozone layer, the spread of toxic chemicals, climate change and the overfishing of the seas put at risk the well-being of whole communities, and even the very survival of certain small island countries.

Weapons of mass destruction continue to proliferate. We must take a stand against those who are blind to the lessons of the past and remain determined to acquire or expand their stocks of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction.

The Secretary-General reminds us, too, that

> "social peace is as important as strategic or political peace".
>
> (A/47/277, para. 59)

It is clear that a root cause of insecurity and conflict at the international level is the existence of social structures, policies and systems within States which marginalise minorities or other groups. Such tension will be resolved only when the social needs of the underprivileged are addressed. The proposed United Nations social Summit could have a catalytic role to play in this area. I suggest that it is only through tolerance and through talking to one another that we can all encourage and achieve full respect for human rights and implement the international standards as they were intended.

The other very important issues raised by the Secretary-General must be considered thoroughly. This session of the Assembly provides the first opportunity to debate them and I wish to outline New Zealand's views.

First, let me refer to peace and security. New Zealand stands very firmly behind the United Nations as an instrument for collective action when security is threatened. The situations which the world wants the United Nations to respond to today are not the same as those of the cold-war era. New Zealand supports concepts such as preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping and peace-building. As a world body we know that consensus is important but collectively we must be bold, we must be innovative.

New Zealand believes it is vital that the United Nations respond to situations which threaten the peace or cry out for global action, wherever in the world they may occur. We cannot, we must not, allow parts of the world to be marginalized or thought less important than others. The tragedy in Somalia is different from, but of equal horror to, that in what was Yugoslavia.

Secondly, I want to endorse strongly the conclusion that there is an inextricable link between security and economic development. This is not a new or radical idea. Every political leader knows from domestic experience that a nation feels more secure when its economy is performing strongly. People in every country have rapidly growing expectations, but with the global economy very sluggish leaders are finding it difficult to satisfy these ambitions.

Further, we need major sustainable growth in the global economy if the development concerns identified at the Earth summit at Rio are to be achieved.

One fact, though self-evident, must be repeated: sustainable and equitable economic growth and development will be possible only if there is an open and fair international trading system.

As a world community we need the courage to pull down the artificial barriers to economic growth. The solution is in our hands. We need leaders to say "Yes" to fair trade and "No" to their protectionist lobbies. If we knock out the selfish and inward-looking tendencies to protectionism and subsidization, we will create a surge in global trade and real growth in the global economy. It will provide the opportunities we all want - so let's do it.

The alternative is bleak. History shows only too clearly what can happen if there is a deep and prolonged global recession. Political extremists come to the fore and begin to manipulate desperate people. Disintegrating economies fall into the hands of dictators, and international peace and security are quickly put at risk.

But this need not be so. It is not inevitable. A breakthrough in the multilateral trade negotiations, the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), is achievable, given the right degree of political will. There is a risk that the political will may ebb away, that the focus may be lost, that excuses for delay may become more important than reasons to press on. Should that prove true, then the bold reform set out in the Dunkel text will go down as one more lost opportunity. We cannot afford that so we - New Zealand - continue to urge the European Community and the United States to resolve their differences and to put the GATT talks back on track for a successful conclusion. For world economic growth, it is not an optional extra; it is essential.

Just as economics and security are closely linked, the world seems to have accepted, just in time, that there is a third element to this equation. It is the environment. Everything we do has an impact on the environment. If we cripple the environment, it will affect our economies, our societies and our security. Moreover, these impacts will not respect national boundaries.

Before the Earth summit, some important first steps were taken. The Montreal Protocol proved that the world had the political will to deal with the problem of ozone depletion. The General Assembly itself responded to the challenge of drift-net fishing and has secured a moratorium on that ecologically-destructive technique of fishing.

The Earth summit, under the auspices of the United Nations, has given us a challenging work programme, "Agenda 21", to match the Secretary-General's proposals, "An Agenda for Peace". But international agendas only work if nations are committed to their success.

New Zealand went to the Earth summit committed to working for consensus solutions to the problems of environment and development which ultimately threaten us all.

New Zealand is a country endowed with a rich environmental inheritance. But we understand that our good fortune does not give us the moral right to point the finger at other countries which are struggling for their very survival. At the same time, our considerable experience in sustainable resource management - for example, in the development of new forests - can be helpful in the search for practical solutions to problems of resource depletion.

As part of New Zealand's commitment to environmental protection and to providing sustainable resources, we have just agreed to go ahead with the planting of another 200,000 hectares of forest.

At the Earth summit, we accepted a commitment to augment our aid programme as soon as possible in order to assist in the prompt and effective implementation of Agenda 21. Our development assistance projects, based on consultation with our partner countries, particularly in the South Pacific, have always had a strong focus on the environment and on sustainable development.

But aid alone is not enough. New Zealand, like many countries which depend on agricultural exports, has been severely disadvantaged by a world trading system which handicaps non-subsidized and efficient producers. We therefore strongly support the call in Agenda 21 for an open, transparent and non-discriminatory trading system that reveals the real environmental costs of unsustainable production and enables all countries to pursue truly sustainable development on a secure and equitable basis.

To achieve that would be to achieve a real foundation for peace and progress. I am not making these observations from an ivory tower. For its part, New Zealand already has one of the most open economies in the world. Yes, there was a short-term cost in achieving that, but now we are reaping rewards through higher productivity and international competitiveness.

Despite the progress made from the ending of the cold war, we have not yet removed the threat from weapons of mass destruction.

New Zealand warmly welcomed the agreement reached by President Bush and President Yeltsin in June. The two largest nuclear arsenals are to be reduced by some 70 per cent. That is remarkable progress and both leaders deserve and have our thanks. They have made historic progress but we must keep the momentum up. Unless we take decisive action, the dangers from nuclear proliferation will increase.

(Mr. Bolger, New Zealand)

Therefore we must build on the leadership shown by two nuclear-weapon States in declaring moratoriums. We must advance the goal, which New Zealand has unwaveringly pursued, of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We must strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards regime. And we must secure an indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995.

France's decision to suspend testing has been widely welcomed by New Zealand and Pacific island countries in the South Pacific Forum region. It has opened the way for significantly more positive relations between France and the region, which I welcome. We hope the moratorium will be maintained, and copied by others.

Another milestone approaches, with the presentation to this session of the General Assembly of a treaty banning another class of weapons of mass destruction: chemical weapons. Patient and persistent efforts over 20 years will have their reward. New Zealand has strongly supported those efforts and intends to be an original signatory to the treaty. We urge other countries to take the same step.

And we must not ignore the continued proliferation of conventional armaments. There are legitimate concerns about the levels and availability of highly destructive conventional weapons. The implementation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms would be a useful first step on the way to greater accountability in this area.

Finally, I want to touch on the institutional issues the Secretary-General has raised. We strongly endorse the role that is envisaged for the United Nations to work with, and on occasions through, regional organizations that have some special contribution they can make. Already in South Africa we see cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth beginning to bear positive fruit. In Somalia the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference have contributed positively to the United Nations mission. In the Americas the Organization of American States (OAS) has played an increasingly effective role.

(Mr. Bolger, New Zealand)

The United Nations role in Cambodia is of particular importance in this regard. The operation is unique and deserves the highest praise. But the countries of the region - which include New Zealand, with 100 men and women in the United Nations force - have also played a major part in bringing about the conditions necessary for a successful United Nations involvement. Regional organizations such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been indispensable in this process.

The fact of the matter is that the United Nations cannot do everything. Neither do I expect it to do everything - but free from the shackles of the past it now has a new authority which it must exercise wisely. To maintain its authority we must ensure that democratic principles are applied to the workings of the United Nations itself. That means that the small must be represented in major United Nations decision-making as well as the large.

It means that there must be fair and regular rotation among Member States. And it means we must evolve processes that will allow constructive communication between the Security Council and the wider United Nations membership so that broad coalitions in support of Security Council action can be forged while preserving room for quick and decisive actions where necessary.

New Zealand's commitment to a strong, effective and democratic United Nations has never wavered. At the beginning, at the San Francisco Conference in 1945, New Zealand championed the broadest possible participation in decision-making. Over the years we have backed up our words with a real commitment to United Nations peace-keeping efforts. We have participated thus far in 15 such operations: New Zealanders have worn the blue beret in Croatia and Bosnia, Lebanon, Cyprus, India, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Namibia, Angola, Cambodia, the Congo and Yemen. In addition, New Zealand supplied personnel to assist the United Nations with mine removal in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I want to return to the two agendas which are before this Assembly and which seek to achieve a new partnership of nations. Nothing is more important than the Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for the Environment and Sustainable Development. The United Nations Secretary-General and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development have both identified monumental challenges for the General Assembly for several years to come. They also highlight the reality of global interdependence. The way ahead has to lie in cooperation rather than confrontation, in a recognition that the future of each of us is tied up with the future of us all and that no agenda, no matter how noble its goals, will succeed unless first and foremost we are prepared to work for them. New Zealand is.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of New Zealand for the statement he has just made.

Mr. James Brendan Bolger, Prime Minister of New Zealand, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. PAPACONSTANTINOU (Greece): Allow me, first of all, to extend to you, Sir, the warmest congratulations of the Greek Government on your election to the presidency. Your personal qualities and diplomatic skill augur well for progress on the work of this session. Moreover, we are especially pleased to salute in your person the representative of a neighbouring country with which Greece maintains long-standing relations of close friendship. I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Shihabi, for the effective manner in which he discharged his functions as President of the Assembly last year.

Allow me also to point out how impressed the Greek Government is by the way the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has been discharging his duties since he took office at the beginning of the year. We are absolutely certain that he will continue his work with the same dynamism and diplomatic dexterity, for the benefit of both the international community and this Organization, which has grown since the General Assembly last met a year ago.

Let me also join other representatives in welcoming the new Members that have been admitted to the United Nations as independent States, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, San Marino, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The admission of these new Members is a renewed expression of the desire of our Organization to welcome in its midst all those States that undertake the commitment to adhere to the purposes and principles set out in the United Nations Charter.

Earlier this week the Foreign Minister of the United Kingdom, in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Community, delivered a statement on behalf of its 12 Member States. My Government fully subscribes to the contents of that statement.

Greece is firmly committed to, and fully supports, the process of European integration. We believe that the economic and political union we agreed on when we adopted the Maastricht Treaty last year will strengthen progress and enhance prosperity not only on the European continent, but also in all the countries the Community is trading with. Greece was among the first European countries to ratify the Maastricht Treaty, and we are happy that the French people as well ratified the Treaty at the referendum of last Sunday. Allow me to note that the "yes" vote in the Greek Parliament was overwhelming - 286 positive votes out of a total of 300 deputies voting - and is indicative of the extraordinary degree of unanimity of the Greek people concerning the position of our country for a united Europe.

I have the honour to stand before this Assembly as the representative of a nation that is now completing a year-long celebration marking 2,500 years since our ancestors first invented a form of government called in Greek demokratia, which in rough translation means "rule by the people": democracy, which was destined to become one of the most outstanding contributions of Greece to the collective heritage of mankind and a cornerstone of world civilization. We Greeks felt happy and, allow me to say, proud a year ago, as we saw democracy and its twin principle, freedom, gaining ground throughout the world and consolidating its presence in countries where totalitarianism had long held sway. In welcoming new members to the community of free nations, the Greek Government expressed the hope that the post-cold-war world would be based on the principles of democracy and freedom, on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and on the rule of law.

That hope was expressed a year ago. Can we now, a year later, ascertain the extent to which it has been met? Admittedly, a year's time is too short to allow a conclusive judgement, but the events of the last 12 months offer some evidence of the direction in which the world is moving. And, I must say, the evidence available is not as encouraging as our expectations were. In fact, we have witnessed developments that threaten the fragile positive trends we had begun to see. We have seen peoples that gained their freedom and independence taking the path of nationalism. Signs abound that we are entering a dangerous and unpredictable world situation, where conflicts, extreme nationalism and tensions of a new nature are erupting, and where the clash of interests could take the place of the ideological confrontations of which we have had bitter experience in the past.

In spite of the comfort of being safe at last from the threat of nuclear annihilation since the recent enormous strides in disarmament, in some areas the world seems to be moving into a state of uncontrolled proliferation of conventional arms and civil strife. In some cases, that civil strife seems to be on the brink of spilling over and becoming a threat to regional and international peace and security. To make matters worse, the weak economies of many developing countries remain in the grip of a deepening crisis, while growing poverty, and in certain cases even hunger, is becoming a menace to recent gains in democracy. And the environment continues to deteriorate at an alarming pace.

Faced with such a situation, the world community has to react collectively. And as it is the United Nations that embodies the collegiality of the world community, it is incumbent upon it to devise ways and means to help humanity deal with the situation. In this respect, the nations and the peoples of the world are fortunate in that, with the cold war behind us, the paralysis that had for a long time plagued our Organization has now disappeared. The United Nations is now indeed showing signs that it is willing to live up to the expectations placed in it.

A series of actions is being undertaken to deal with the major problems confronting humanity now. In this context, earlier this year, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the largest summit ever held, met at Rio de Janeiro. Next year we will see the Second World Conference on Human Rights. In 1994, population and development will be dealt with. In 1995, the World Conference on Women will take place. Finally, a world summit for social development has been proposed.

But the first in this series of actions was taken last January and directly concerned international peace and security. The Greek Government welcomed the convening of the Security Council at the summit level to reaffirm the world community's devotion to the principle of collective security and to the settlement of disputes in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, and to consider anew the means by which collective security can be upheld through the Organization.

Greece has also welcomed the document entitled "An Agenda for Peace", on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping, issued by the Secretary-General in response to a request made by the members of the Security Council at their January summit meeting. I take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for a document of vision, lucidity and challenging ideas. We in the Greek Government have studied it with great interest and are looking forward to participating in the fruitful debates that are bound to follow in the various bodies of our Organization.

We are pleased that the Secretary-General sees the concepts of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping in their proper perspective within the larger concept of peace and security that goes beyond the military sphere and encompasses social and economic factors, primary among which is the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We are also encouraged that the Secretary-General has not failed to emphasize the importance of democracy not only within nations but also among the family of nations.

The perception of selectivity in the application of the principles of the Charter must be avoided if the moral authority of the United Nations is to be maintained. This is particularly urgent now that the enforcement capability of the Organization is being enhanced and put to use. Enforcement without moral authority is coercion and tyranny. Smaller nations need to be reassured that no Power will succeed in usurping the moral authority of the United Nations and using it for the advancement of its own interests.

It is the fervent hope of the Greek Government that the current turbulent situation will prove to be only a brief transition and will soon be replaced by a spirit of international cooperation and solidarity. The deployment of common efforts for the maintenance of international peace and security through preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping are an indispensable manifestation of such international solidarity. The other two foundations on which this solidarity must be based are respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and a common concern for the protection of the environment.

The subject of human rights is, of course, not new. We rejoice that the European Community has time and again emphasized that respect for, and promotion and safeguarding of human rights is an essential element in international relations and, therefore, one of the cornerstones of cooperation and of relations between the Community and its member States and other countries.

The expression of concern about human rights violations can no longer be considered mere interference in a State's internal affairs. Established principles governing relations among States - such as non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and respect for the national sovereignty of States - must accommodate efforts by the United Nations and by regional organizations to protect the human rights of individuals and social groups that are threatened in particular States.

A few words about Greece's relations with its neighbours and the state of affairs in our region.

We have repeatedly and officially stated that Greece has no territorial claims whatsoever against any of the countries neighbouring ours. We offer our friendship to all of them and we hope, indeed we are certain, they will reciprocate. We maintain the best possible relations with our Balkan as well as our Mediterranean neighbours.

Regarding our relations with Turkey, we consider that it is of primary importance for Greece and our neighbour Turkey that our two countries display the necessary will and imagination to create a climate of mutual confidence, security and stability which will redound to the benefit of the Eastern Mediterranean in general and our two peoples in particular.

Greece believes that it is high time for our two neighbouring States to find the way, on the basis of international law and international conventions and treaties, to establish closer relations, compatible with the requirements of the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, as well as with the espectations of our peoples, dictated by geographical proximity and by common interests. This intention, our political will and our sincere desire have been repeatedly stressed by our Prime Minister, Mr. Mitsotakis, who has already met with the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr. Demirel, four times this year, while I have had the opportunity to speak in the same spirit to my Turkish counterpart, Mr. Hikmet Cetin, with whom I have already met three or four times. We, for our part, laid emphasis on the fact that the problem of Cyprus, which exercises a negative influence on our bilateral relations, should at last find a proper solution on the basis of all relevant United Nations resolutions.

I should like to remind the Assembly that despite coordinated efforts the problem remains unresolved. Cyprus continues to be divided and a large part of its territory is still under Turkish occupation. The other consequences of the 1974 invasion, such as those of the refugees, the missing persons, and the continuing efforts to change the demographic structure of the island and to plunder of Cyprus' cultural heritage, still exist and constitute the main elements of the tragic reality of this Mediterranean island, an integral part of the European family and a State Member of this Organization. In this respect, the report of the European Commission of Human Rights published on 2 April 1992 sets out the violations of human rights in Cyprus, concerning missing and displaced persons, separation of families, deprivation of possessions and so on.

Despite the present status quo in Cyprus which the most recent Security Council resolution explicitly characterizes as not acceptable we, together with the international community, look forward to the systematic efforts of the Secretary-General - with the active support of the five permanent members of the Security Council - to bring about a just, a viable and a functional solution to the Cyprus problem.

In this respect, we note that the Secretary-General's set of ideas, including the map attached thereto, which was initially discussed last July and August, with special emphasis on the territorial, refugee and property issues, should form the basis of negotiations during the follow-on talks scheduled to be resumed in New York in late October.

We urge Turkey to use all its decisive influence on the Turkish-Cypriot side to ensure that it approaches the talks in a constructive manner which may well contribute to the solution of the problem and the elimination of a real anachronism in today's Europe.

(Mr. Papaconstantinou, Greece)

In conclusion on this subject, I wish to stress once again that the just settlement of this problem would greatly benefit relations between our two peoples and our two countries. Moreover, it would also constitute an important element of Turkey's aspirations to its European orientation. We have been trying, most emphatically, to make it clear that it is our will to establish the most friendly relations with our neighbour Turkey. I do not think that the international community would be proud if it were to leave this problem, which has been dragging on for over 18 years, unresolved.

The situation in the Balkans remains a cause of major concern to all. The Yugoslav crisis continues to constitute a potential danger for destabilization of the whole Balkans and a danger for peace and security in the wider area. Greece, as a Balkan country, naturally is directly concerned and, therefore, from the very beginning of the crisis has not spared any effort to achieve a speedy and negotiated solution. The convening of the London Conference under the co-chairmanship of the European Community and the United Nations represents our only hope for a lasting settlement. We wish to reiterate here our full support to the chairmanship of the Conference, to which we are ready to offer all our assistance.

The Assembly should send a clear message to all former Yugoslav parties that there can be no alternative to a negotiated solution of the crisis and that the international community is determined not to recognize any *fait accompli* created by force. We believe that no single party is to blame for the current crisis and its horrors and that all share part of the blame. In any event, we must act swiftly to stop the war before it is too late, for the dangers of spill-over of the crisis are real.

Any form of military intervention in the former Yugoslavia is highly inadvisable. We have cautioned against it because we consider the staging of a war to stop another war absurd and self-defeating. Indeed, if a majority of other States were to decide on some form of military intervention in Yugoslavia, Greece would in no way participate. All States - and mainly Balkan States - that neighbour the former Yugoslavia, and all States with a special interest in the area, should in any case be excluded from such action. Otherwise, the enmities, the mistrust and the rekindling of bitter memories of the past will be a source of persistent bitterness and instability for generations to come.

We want the Balkans to be an area of peace and we wish to avoid a return to the time when they were known as the powder-keg of Europe. We want good relations with all our Balkan neighbours. We are ready to support them economically and also to facilitate the development of their relations with the European Community. We have no claims against anybody and we expect them to have similar motivations toward us. It is for this reason that, as regards the former "Yugoslav Federal Socialist Republic of Macedonia", we have actively and consistently advocated full compliance with the Lisbon Declaration of the European Community, according to which that Republic should be recognized under a name which does not include the term "Macedonia".

Otherwise, we will surely have sown the seeds of future tensions and conflicts in the area and we will have jeopardized the ability of the peoples of the Balkans to live and coexist peacefully together. Our insistence on this point is not only an emotional or sentimental matter, now is it only a matter of historical accuracy. It is, more than anything, a matter of political realism. The usurping of a Greek name and of ancient Greek emblems, combined with constitutional provisions insinuating territorial expansion, is nothing if not a clear indication of territorial claims. If we allow this policy to be pursued we shall condemn future generations for we shall be forming the nucleus of friction for some time to come.

Having said that, I wish to make it quite clear that we have never harboured any enmity towards this nascent republic. Even when, recently, we reluctantly had to discontinue fuel exports there, in order to counter unjustified, unfounded accusations that Greece was circumventing Security Council resolutions 713 (1991) and 757 (1992), we never interfered with the supply of food and humanitarian aid. As a matter of fact, exports of fuel supplies have already been resumed now that the European Community has adopted new regulations to ensure the movement of goods towards the former Yugoslavia that safeguard the effectiveness of the United Nations embargo.

The arms embargo should also be reinforced with respect to all sides and an effective mechanism for its control should be put in place.

Concerning Kossovo, which is a particularly sensitive, potentially dangerous area, we should encourage the Serbian Government and the ethnic Albanians to pursue a serious and open dialogue within the framework of the London Conference with a view to reaching an early solution to the problems of this area. We maintain that a status of autonomy, without any change of frontiers, would satisfy all concerned.

The international community must also be alerted to the various reports from many parts of the former Yugoslavia concerning atrocities. It should be made clear to all those who are responsible for such acts that they will be held personally responsible. This is a point about which my Government feels particularly strongly.

The easing of international tensions with the end of the cold war provides new possibilities and resources for development. Our immediate objective should be to restore growth that would not irreparably destroy the air, the rivers, the forests, the oceans or any other part of nature. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held at Rio de Janeiro last June has raised high hopes that the consensus which has emerged and which strikes a balance between environment and development will be sustained. At the same time, we note with great satisfaction that a political consensus is growing concerning the fundamental relationship between pluralistic democracy, respect for human rights, and development as an equitable and sustainable process.

Now that the end of the cold war has raised the hopes of millions, a system of collective security is envisaged to preserve world peace and stability and to provide a new vision of development very much along the lines of the Charter of the United Nations. Economic and social development is not possible without peace and stability, which are prerequisites and not substitutes for development. The last 18 months have witnessed profound historic changes in the world economy. A large part of the world remains in a state of transition and uncertainty while it is being transformed fundamentally. The Secretary-General has offered us a new concept of integrated development no longer based on the traditional strict differentiation among political, economic and social issues. In his introductory remarks to the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, he argued in favour of an integrated approach to global issues under which the United Nations system, through preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping will bring its political influence to bear on the solution of economic and social issues. This approach is best suited to the Organization because it will secure "a unit thrust" in all the activities of the United nations system through enhanced coordination of agencies.

The recently concluded Conference on Environment and Development held at Rio de Janeiro is a first example of this approach. A conceptual bridge was crossed there. We hope that fundamental principles agreed on at Rio de Janeiro will be translated into concrete action.

The world economic situation presents an uneven and variegated picture. In countries where there is a movement towards a market system, economic difficulties are increasing, exacerbated by new assertions of nationalism, as well as by ethnic and religious challenges, which threaten social peace and the cohesion of States.

In the developing countries growth remains on the whole sluggish, while there has been great diversity in performance among them. Moreover, the problems which plagued the developing world in the 1980s still persist. As pointed out in the World Economic Survey, 1992, world production fell in 1991 for the first time since the Second World War, and the recovery that was beginning to take shape appeared to be exceptionally weak. The Uruguay Round of trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) remains stalled. Financial assistance for development purposes is still hard to come by, while developing and other countries must complete painful adjustment programmes. High inflation, large-scale deficits, debt burdens and lack of adequate investments have not yet shown signs of improvement. Furthermore, economic hardship has given rise to fanaticism, unchecked migratory movements, civil strife and criminal acts. Development continues to be the most serious challenge of all countries.

The world economic situation provides an opportunity for a strengthening of the role of the United Nations system as regards enhancing international cooperation for development. The important political changes of the last two years and the integrated nature of political, economic and social issues call for the United Nations to play a major role in shaping the directions of social and economic development.

Progress in the regional conflicts that have been on the agenda of our Organization has again been uneven. Peace in the Middle East remains elusive. The most important element of the Middle East problem is the Arab-Israeli conflict. Two of the most ancient peoples in the world, each of which has made outstanding contributions to the common heritage of mankind, have for decades confronted each other, seemingly unwilling to accept for the other what each demands for itself, that is, the right to exist within safe and recognized borders, the right to a homeland, and the right to take charge of its own destiny. However, the events of the last 12 months seem to indicate that each side may now be prepared to accept for the other at least part of what it demands for itself. And this development, although in itself not sufficient for the solution to the conflict, does seem to justify the judgement that the chances for peace are better now than they were a year ago.

I wish in this connection to pay tribute to the commitment and perseverance of the sponsors of the peace process launched in Madrid in October 1991, as well as to the wisdom and courage displayed by the parties directly involved. It is the fervent hope of the Greek Government that the new Israeli Government, as well as the Arab parties involved, will seize the opportunity to work together towards a comprehensive peace.

No one can dispute today that apartheid is an unacceptable political system that has to be eradicated in all its forms and practical consequences. Furthermore, the international community and the main political leaders in South Africa are committed to the creation of a united, non-racial and democratic South African society through peaceful means and through negotiations involving all parties concerned.

However, the recent wave of violence in South Africa, which claimed many innocent lives, seemed to pose a serious threat to the negotiating process, and to undermine the results achieved so far. Greece firmly believes that no effort should be spared to help South African society keep the momentum and to continue building upon what has been achieved. Let us bear in mind that, now more than ever, the new reality of intensified subregional, regional and international cooperation in the political and economic fields points to an important role for a new, democratic, united and non-racial South Africa.

In the Horn of Africa, in Somalia, a human tragedy of almost unprecedented scale is unfolding. War, drought and the collapse of civil authority threaten the very existence of the country: the physical existence - the lives - of its people. Starvation has already claimed thousands of lives.

We know, however, that the difficulties of the two regions I have just referred to are only part of a more complicated, multifaceted structural p roblem faced by the whole continent of Africa in all fields of human activity. We have to give all possible help to the countries of Africa to solve their present problems and to undertake new efforts of cooperation and integration which will foster development, peace and stability.

The Greek Government welcomes the positive results of the Helsinki summit of 1992 in the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and attaches particular importance to the comprehensive nature of the CSCE process, which brings together the Governments and the peoples of Europe and those of the United States and Canada. The Helsinki follow-up meeting provided an important opportunity for discussions on the future role of the CSCE. In particular, the strengthening of its institutions is expected to increase the effectiveness of the CSCE in the prevention, management and peaceful settlement of disputes. The Concluding Document adopted at the summit characterizes the CSCE as a regional arrangement in the sense of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the United Nation Charter. In that way, the CSCE process contributes substantially to the collegiality of the world community and is therefore supported wholeheartedly by the Greek Government.

Although the international community has increased its cooperation in combating drug abuse and the illicit production of and trafficking in narcotics, this scourge continues to plague and undermine our societies. Consequently, further intensified and more effective international cooperation is required within the existing international and regional mechanisms provided for by the United Nations and regional organizations.

My country, which lies at the crossroads of the world, continues to be actively engaged in the fight against drugs. It is in the process of adopting new legislation and policies to enhance its effectiveness in combating the problem. Furthermore, we have increased our cooperation with all States of our region with a view to adopting and implementing effective practical measures against drug trafficking.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm my country's commitment to the United Nations and to the spirit of international cooperation and solidarity it embodies. We join forces with the other nations of the world and pledge to make every possible effort for world peace and stability and for a humane international community, on an enduringly beautiful planet.

Mr. TAVERAS GUZMAN (Dominican Republic) (interpretation from Spanish): Permit me to begin, Sir, by taking this opportunity to convey to you the congratulations of the delegation of the Dominican Republic on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. Coming from a region that is taking on a new dimension in the international community, you will no doubt take a realistic view of the major challenges posed by the world situation. You have first-hand experience of the transformations taking place in the world. You are thus superbly qualified to guide with composure the deliberations of the Assembly.

We wish also to pay a warm tribute to the distinguished Saudi diplomat, His Excellency Mr. Samir S. Shihabi, the outgoing President, for his skill and for the fruitful results he achieved in his work.

On the new international landscape, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism, the likelihood of a world war has vanished. But in many regions it remains possible that conflicts of an unpredictable nature could take place.*

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* Mr. Moumin (Comoros), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Hence the international community should remain vigilant, because though it is true that the danger of nuclear war has disappeared, it is no less true that another menace is still with us, that of the continued quest, on the part of some countries, for technology for the production of nuclear weaponry, behind the back of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Agency deserves to be revitalized so that it will be able to work effectively in its efforts to prevent the proliferation of those terrible weapons.

Mankind is still burdened with problems arising out of the so-called conventional weapons, which are becoming more and more destructive, and what is needed is a degree of international control to limit them. That would make available resources that, if properly used, could contribute to the development of the countries of the third world, which are already suffering because of heavy public debt and restrictive and protectionist measures impeding international trade.

That is the most important challenge facing mankind, and this forum is the right place to discuss those issues and create conditions and lay down guidelines to improve the lot of the two thirds of mankind that today finds itself threatened, not only by the economic crisis and the inequalities between North and South but also by the continued deterioration of the environment, which has been degraded by our own deliberate or unwitting use and abuse of it.

I have expressed these thoughts because I come from a country, the Dominican Republic, that is small in size, with an area of only 48,400 square kilometres and a population of 7,500,000, and we feel the ill effects of the problems I have mentioned: burdensome external debt and declining trade because of restrictive and protectionist practices in the countries to which we export our agricultural products, whose prices are constantly falling in world markets. Our adverse trade situation means that we are losing significant resources that could be devoted to our development.

Nevertheless, over the last two years the Dominican economy has undergone a successful process of adjustment that has made it possible to eliminate inflation, stabilize the national currency and bring the budgetary deficit under control, all as a result of the adoption of a restrictive monetary policy. This has helped to rebuild confidence in the production sectors. We believe that confidence in our country's business sector in the immediate future is indispensable for the achievement of an accelerated and sustained recovery of the Dominican economy. Even more important in that regard is the country's ability in the short term to increase the foreign-exchange income that it needs for its development, at a time when the export of raw materials is being replaced by service-sector products.

The Dominican Republic is now pursuing closer ties with the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), with a view to bringing about our definitive entrance into CARICOM, on the basis of the great significance that the Dominican Government attaches at this time to the achievement of a more advantageous position *vis-à-vis* the European Economic Community as a State member of the Lomé Convention, and the Dominican Republic is thus aiming to bring about greater openness in markets when it comes to selling its products internationally.

The achievements of the Dominican Republic, despite the grave economic crisis suffered in recent years by Latin American and Caribbean countries, have been the result of good government, presided over by Dr. Joaquin Balaguer, a champion of democracy who gives us an example of what

(Mr. Taveras Guzman, Dominican Republic)

a leader can do with the scant resources of a poor State when they are used judiciously to create conditions favourable to the people. Those achievements include, among other things, the construction of thousands of dwellings, hundreds of kilometres of highways and local roads, as well as schools and hospitals to provide vital social services to a constantly growing population.

Let me now turn to the situation of our fraternal neighbour, Haiti. Unfortunately, throughout its existence as an independent country Haiti has endured a chronic situation of economic penury and the impoverishment of its soil. This has forced its population to emigrate in waves across our borders and by sea in search of a better life. Today that situation is made even more tragic by the political crisis our Haitian brothers are going through.

The Dominican authorities and people are not indifferent to that situation, which stems from the *coup d'état* that cut short President Aristide's experiment in democracy.

(Mr. Taveras Guzman,
Dominican Republic)

That development was condemned by the Organization of American States (OAS), which imposed a trade embargo to compel the current authorities to restore legality. So far as the Dominican Government, presided over by Mr. Joaquin Balaguer, is concerned, negotiation and dialogue within the context of absolute respect for the norms of international law are the most appropriate instruments in the quest for peace. Accordingly, we have been and continue to be providing disinterested support to all the parties to the conflict, in the hope that a solution that would resolve existing differences can be found and that all institutions in the Republic of Haiti can again function normally.

Our Government is deeply democratic, respects human rights and jealously guards its prerogative of guaranteeing the liberties of those inhabiting the Republic.

We deplore the fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia as well as the tragedy that has befallen its people. Bereft of any guarantee of their rights, they are suffering the onslaught of a tragic fratricidal war that is taking a heavy toll in human lives, particularly those of women and children, who are subjected to constant air attacks and shellings and are deprived of the food and medicine they need in order to subsist and treat their wounds and illnesses. We support the measures adopted by the United Nations with regard to the former Yugoslavia, measures that urge the parties to respect human rights and forcefully condemn the loathsome practice of "ethnic cleansing".

It is a source of satisfaction to my delegation to see the communication that is developing between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's

(Mr. Taveras Guzman, Dominican Republic)

Republic of Korea, aimed at reuniting the Korean family. We regret, however, that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is persisting in its nuclear research with the aim of building nuclear weapons.

By the same token, we are optimistic about the situation developing among the Arab peoples and the people of Israel, and we hope that this atmosphere of dialogue and negotiation will gain even greater momentum so that those concerned may live in peace and harmony on their lands while moving towards a future of prosperity and progress.

Though the cold war is a thing of the past, the danger and the tragedy of regional conflicts are still with us. Settling those conflicts requires international cooperation and the good will of the parties involved. However, another serious threat to peace and to the well-being of our peoples still faces the Americas and other parts of the world. We refer here to drug trafficking and the destruction and social and moral harm which that scourge entails for all our communities. Our country supports every single measure taken by the United Nations to cope with this serious problem, and calls for continued efforts to resolve and do away with this global scourge.

In this vein, the Dominican Republic has been taking forceful steps to confront this evil, pursuing a dynamic drug-abuse-prevention drive and at the same time launching major administrative, legislative and judicial initiatives, not only against drug production, but also against the marketing of and the trafficking in drugs. Moreover, we have signed bilateral accords along these lines with countries in our region and are in the final phase of preparations leading to our accession to the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

(Mr. Taveras Guzman,
Dominican Republic)

The facts in terms of the state of the environment the world over are growing ever more alarming and must be a source of concern to, and a reason for solidarity among, all States Members of the Organization.

Because of interdependence, damage done to the environment anywhere in the world has an impact upon us all. Accordingly, international cooperation is necessary so that the States of the third world as well as the industrialized nations can strive together to ensure that present and future generations will be able to enjoy a clean planet Earth, where life will be easier and happier. The Dominican Goverment, aware of these facts, has embarked on a process of reforesting our country and of conserving our natural resources. We support whatever steps the international community may take along these lines, and, to demonstrate this, we are submitting to the Congress of our Republic, with a view to accession, the 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, along with its Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

At this point, we should like to refer to the matter of racial discrimination, yet another major problem that still shocks the conscience of humankind and continues to represent a major challenge to and violation of the most elementary norms of human rights.

In this sense, our country has repeatedly, in this very forum, stated its rejection and repudiation of the apartheid system. Two years ago, right here, we expressed satisfaction at the announcement by the President of South Africa, Frederick de Klerk, of the recognition of the rights of other races in that country to ensure that an end would be put to the system of apartheid. However, today racial tensions continue to escalate, and it is not possible to discern any rapid progress in the process of change in South Africa. The policy of apartheid constitutes a crime against the conscience and the dignity of human beings and, therefore, it must be totally eliminated, so that a genuine democracy, based on a multi-ethnic and pluralist system, may be established in South Africa.

The 1990s have begun with great frustration, but also with great hope - frustration because of the stagnation or backsliding in terms of social progress, which the 1980s left as a legacy to the majority of developing countries; hope because what is taking place is a real revolution in thinking, which makes imperative a review and a revision of proposals for the promotion of development.

In the economic arena, there is a constant search for ways and means of fostering the resumption of growth and modernization, as well as the more active participation of those countries in the world economy. The data on the social condition of the majority of the world's population, and the possibility that those data may worsen as a result of economic measures that have been adopted, have made it necessary to place the issue of the social dimension in the world at the heart of our debate.

The concept that social issues are a secondary matter, in contrast with the primary process taking place in political forums, is a grave and extremely costly mistake. In fact, if we do not deal with the social problems they turn very quickly into political problems. The groan of hunger does more than break the silence; eventually it rends peace asunder. That is why the Dominican Republic backs unreservedly the convening of a world summit for social development. We take the view that the concept of human security, which that proposal reflects, refers directly to the important - indeed, the overriding - task facing all societies: the provision of food, clothing and housing in quantities sufficient for all, while promoting social progress in harmony with the environment, and supporting those institutions that respond to the noblest aspirations that human beings cherish throughout their lives. Even if only in terms strictly of a cost-benefit analysis, it is cheaper to deal with social problems now. Dealing with them later involves paying the price of social upheaval. We literally cannot afford to ignore that truth.

We have great pleasure in taking advantage of this opportunity to reaffirm our resolute support for the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. The Dominican Republic is profoundly committed to the success of that body.

Today, the United Nations constitutes that ecumenical, common forum where we set forth our ideas as we seek solutions intended to bring about a better life in the world in which we live - a world free from discrimination and waste. It is our desire to see the work of this Organization revitalized so that it may be able more effectively to do its job and live up to its obligations. We give it our fullest support, and we express our faith and hope in universal peace and harmony.

Mr. LUMBI OKONGO (Zaire) (interpretation from French): In addressing this Assembly for the first time, I should like, first, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, to carry out the pleasant duty of conveying to Mr. Ganev of Bulgaria our most earnest and warmest congratulations on his election to the presidency of the Generaly Assembly at its forty-seventh session, and to assure him of our cooperation with a view to achieving a successful outcome.

We should like also to take this opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to Mr. Samir Shihabi of Saudi Arabia for the deft and skilful manner in which he led the work of the last session.

To the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, we reiterate our most earnest congratulations on the outstanding manner in which he has been discharging his difficult responsibilities since he was elected head of our Organization.

We also take this opportunity to welcome the positive and beneficial influence of the activities of our former Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, who was able to give our Organization a new dynamism and brought it closer to the goals assigned to it by its founding fathers.

On behalf of Zaire, I welcome the new Member States that have joined the Organization, thereby bringing us closer to its much-desired goal of universality.

But we are bound to note that the purposes of our Organization laid down in its Charter are far from being achieved, because in many places throughout the world the universal peace that we so earnestly seek is still just an ambition. Indeed, hotbeds of tension have been rekindled, thereby jeopardizing international peace and security, which our Organization has a duty to guarantee. We earnestly appeal to all parties in conflict, wherever they may be, to lay down their arms and exclude the word "force" from their vocabulary.

In this vein, we find a great deal of merit in the Secretary-General's report, "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277), to the international community, in which we find valuable recommendations on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping.

We believe that the Assembly should give the greatest attention to this analysis. Zaire pledges its help in studying these ideas, so useful to our Organization.

The Secretary-General's recommendations lead us to focus on a few of the many areas of tension.

The Security Council meeting on violence in South Africa made it possible to avoid a break in the dialogue established within the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). We reiterate our appeal to all political forces to put an end to their antagonism so that negotiations for the establishment of a representative government may resume. To this end, we strongly urge the South African Government to use all necessary ways and means to put an end to extremist acts of all kinds that lead to violence.

In the Middle East, since the establishment of the Government resulting from the latest elections in Israel and the resumption of negotiations between the parties concerned, we have reason for some hope. We Therefore urge all parties committed to the quest for an overall political solution that would lead to lasting peace in that region to continue along the path of dialogue.

For some years now we have witnessed considerable efforts by the United States of America and the Russian Federation - the Powers with the most sophisticated and most destructive weapons, whether nuclear, conventional, biological or chemical - drastically to reduce the number of such weapons, thereby helping to establish a new era in international politics and in peace and security for States and peoples. Zaire welcomes this most sincerely, and we hope that other military Powers will follow their example. If they do, the second millennium, for which we are preparing so busily, will open up new prospects for humankind as a whole.

Today, in a surge of world-wide solidarity, the developed countries living in prosperity should help, in a spirit of true partnership, the countries of the South to solve the problems related to underdevelopment, which have many complex causes. It is true that underdevelopment will not go away overnight simply because the prosperous countries of the North decide to make available to third world countries financial resources resulting from cutbacks they may make in their military budgets; rather it will be ended by strategies to do away with the dire poverty of the nations of Africa and other underdeveloped countries.

That is why Zaire is convinced that a harmonious future for our planet depends on peace, security and prosperity shared by all nations, both of the North and of the South. And that is why Zaire also believes that the Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development should now be implemented in order to find the necessary resources to solve the daunting problems our peoples face.

It is clear that the collective security aspects likely to create tension and conflict in the world are not only military, but also spring from the extreme impoverishment of our peoples, linked to high population growth rates and the debt burden.

Looking at our ravaged economies, we believe that debt servicing must in no way hamstring our development efforts. Our countries' total external debt is constantly increasing, and has now reached more than $1.5 billion. Without any real readiness to cooperate on the part of the industrialized countries, and without considerable efforts devoted to the planning and establishment of appropriate ad hoc structures, there will be no hope of recovery for our economies.

(Mr. Lumbi Okongo, Zaire)

We strongly hope that those devising strategic development policies for the fourth decade will take into account the recommendations of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) resulting from the Conference of Ministers responsible for economic development and planning, held in Addis Ababa from 20 to 24 April of this year, which drew up guidelines for the years ahead.

We also hope that, in accordance with the New International Development Strategy for the 1990s, the United Nations and the international community will support efforts aimed at the economic recovery of Africa, for the common good of all humankind.

Zaire hails the effective measures to protect and improve the environment envisaged in the Rio Conventions. Indeed, as we have vast areas of protected forests, we would appreciate acceptance by the international community of the idea of recompensing countries that set aside major forested areas with a view to protecting them from the ravages of humankind.

Zaire, whose vast expanses of tropical rainforest have given it the status of the planet's "second lung", after Amazonia, has for long been in the vanguard of environmental conservation. Our country has a major network of linked national parks and reserves covering 8 per cent of our national territory. Some of these nature reserves - the oldest of which were established more than 75 years ago - protect the rarest of species, including the okapi, the white rhinoceros and the gorilla. In the context of the Conventions adopted in Rio de Janeiro, Zaire offers all these natural resources to the international community as a contribution to the common heritage of humankind.

(Mr. Lumbi Okongo, Zaire)

Therefore, my country calls upon the international community, particularly the developed countries, to ensure that additional resources are made available for the effective implementation of Agenda 21 and the new Conventions dealing with biodiversity and climate change. My delegation appeals to all countries to give massive support to Agenda 21 and its accompanying Conventions; it asks that they sign them and take all the necessary steps to ratify them. We invite countries of the North that might still be hesitant about adapting their future behaviour to the requirements of environmental conservation and protection to respond positively.

It is no secret to anyone that Zaire is today experiencing a deep multisectoral crisis essentially attributable to the disastrous management of its human, financial and material resources. The readiness for change expressed by our people as a whole triumphed on 24 April 1990 with the statement delivered by the President of the Republic, which finally recognized the need for democratic political reform.

Following the example of other African countries, Zairians claimed and obtained the holding of a national sovereign conference. Opened in August 1991, that conference is taking place in an atmosphere whose tone was set, on the one hand, by the troubles of September 1991, which ruined the country's already reeling economy, and, on the other, by a succession of political crises spawned in the climate of distrust that existed between the established powers and the opposition. Suspended a number of times, the work of the national sovereign conference none the less has managed to continue to this day because our people has spared no sacrifice to lend its full support to this forum. Because of this, the date of 16 February will live in our memory. Thus, as I speak, the meetings of the national sovereign conference are about to culminate, more than a year after its opening, in the adoption of committee reports following the election of a Prime Minister and the establishment of a transition Government.

The transition period will be managed by three institutions: the Presidency of the Republic, the Supreme Council of the Republic, and the transition Government. As regards the transition Government, the national sovereign conference elected Mr. Etienne Tshisekedi Wa Mulumba as Prime Minister in the vote held last August. The transition Government pledges before international opinion to guide this period of transition in the calmest and most peaceful manner possible.

(Mr. Lumbi Okongo, Zaire)

The essential, indeed overriding, goal of the transition remains the establishment of a state based upon the rule of law. Welcoming the role played by the free press in the evolution of democracy in our country, the Government is determined to encourage and support the media so that they can play their full role in all freedom. Moreover, the transition Government and the Supreme Council of the Republic will establish the High Council for Audio-Visual Media, which will manage the official press agencies in the same spirit. The Government is also committed to fighting censorhip and to promoting freedom of the press in all its forms.

The establishment of a State based on the rule of law necessarily entails respect for the rights of the individual. That is why the Government will work in concert with the associations responsible for human rights issues. To that end, they will be granted the civil status that has been hitherto denied them, as well as being guaranteed access to the media and freedom of action throughout our national territory.

A top priority for the transition Government is laying the best possible groundwork for the advent of a State based on the rule of law. To this end, Zaire intends to hold free and democratic elections shortly. We therefore urgently appeal to the international community to help us organise these elections in the greatest possible transparency.

In conclusion, I should like to draw attention once again to the most alarming situation of our planet, a situation on which the entire international community is focused. My delegation is convinced that the United Nations is and will remain the ideal framework for the quest for peaceful solutions likely to defuse the hotbeds of tension that have developed in Africa, Asia and Europe.

As for Zaire, I have just recalled the great choices made by the national sovereign conference to provide the Zairian people with a new era of peace, democracy and economic development. In accordance with the United Nations Charter, Zaire announces its faith in the basic rights of the individual. To that end, my country will spare no effort to ensure the victory of legality, justice, equity and equality.

I wish the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly the fullest measure of success.

Mr. KIJINER (Marshall Islands): I take this opportunity warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We know that we are in capable hand as we face the important tasks ahead of us. I should also like to express my appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Samir Shihabi of Saudi Arabia, for the distinguished manner in which he guided the General Assembly during the last session.

It was one year ago that the General Assembly honoured the Republic of the Marshall Islands by granting it membership in the United Nations. On this anniversary, as we reflect on our times, we note that a central feature of the international political landscape of the past several years has been the emergence or the re-emergence of the nationalities.

It is our grave responsibility to serve our nations during this challenging period of transition and development. Throughout the world we are seeing the advent of self-government by nations. The sovereignty and dignity of indigenous peoples are coming to be recognized as the basis for effective government. In the Marshall Islands, as in other developing countries throughout the world, we have set high aspirations for our nation and we seek expanded opportunities for our people. Our children will no longer be denied achievement of their potential because of the time and place into which they were born. They will be the hope and the pride of our nation, and our future.

We are grateful to the United Nations for its steadfast commitment to fostering the self-government and self-determination of peoples. For many peoples, it has been a long time coming.

Like so many countries, large and small, the Marshall Islands was for four and a half decades relegated to one camp of the great cold-war struggle. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the residents of Bikini and Enewetak Atolls in the Northern Marshall Islands were relocated from their ancestral homes so that the United States Government could conduct an extensive and widely publicized programme of testing atomic and nuclear weapons. Even though the testing programme was discontinued in the late 1950s, our Government and people are still coming to terms with its effects on our health and way of life. We have many good reasons to applaud the end of the cold war.

(Mr. Kijiner, Marshall Islands)

The breakdown of the two contending camps has left a world in which we can no longer conveniently apply the simple classification of nations into the Eastern bloc or the Western block. It is a time fraught with uncertainty and risk, but it is also a time for rethinking our concepts of government and its relation to individual citizens. And with this rethinking we must see that greater responsibilities are opened to mankind.

We are finding that the expediencies that once worked in the cold war centres of power are too broad, too large in scale, too impersonal, for the smaller nations. Development is now taking place on a more human scale. The growth of nations is providing the context for human ingenuity to assert itself with fewer restraints. The progress of the past decade has resulted in a greater portion of mankind than ever before living in situations of political and economic freedom. Increasingly, the human spirit has been able to soar unfettered by restraints and regulations imposed by authorities too distant from individuals' circumstances.

In a setting of liberty, the individual is empowered to advance to the extent of his ability. For many years teachers in the Marshall Islands have sought to implement the wise insight of Marcus Aurelius:

> "Give a man a fish and you have fed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you have fed him for ever."

Some of our teachers have even convinced themselves that this is Marshallese folk wisdom! But at least they recognize that the most effective help is self-help.

The exchange of ideas and the reduction of trade barriers have served to draw mankind together. People throughout the world are now cooperating in the developmental process. In no nation do people live in the isolation that our ancestors did only a century ago - and that some people endured until the end of the cold war. But, in the face of modernization, the people and places of the world have retained their particular attributes, and these are now giving force and cohesion to their national characters.

The past year has seen the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. At this historic gathering the nations of the world agreed to pursue their developmental goals in a manner that will sustain the ecological diversity of our planet. We in the Marshall Islands, living on low-lying coral atolls and islands, have been following with great interest the scientific debate over global warming. The same careful approach that we have applied to evaluating the impact of nuclear testing in our islands is also being applied to the possible dangers of a rise in sea level. In this regard, I am pleased to reiterate the call that President Amata Kabua of the Marshall Islands made at the Rio Summit for the United Nations to convene a follow-up Earth Summit in 1995, coinciding with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

If global warming endangers certain regions and certain modes of life, we have to confirm the risks and inform our citizens about them. An environment at risk will be a significant constraint for the developing nations in the late twentieth century. Nevertheless, our concern for environmental quality need not put a halt to the developmental process. Instead, it will be part of the overall situation to which individuals will respond with creativity and productivity.

With the assistance of the United Nations, the people of our countries will continue to benefit from the international structure of trade, cultural exchanges, environmental studies and the resolution of disputes.

The heart of the United Nations consists of the many Member nation-States. The rich mix of nationalities is certainly complicating the map of the world. Our challenge is to find collective benefit in this diversity.

As a primary obligation, of course, we must meet basic human needs that are beyond local capabilities: collectively, we can help feed the starving refugees of Somalia; we can commit our manpower and financial resources to help bring peace to the Middle East and in the Balkan States; we can provide emergency assistance to the victims of natural disasters; we can continue to work towards the eradication of the great plagues. In these situations, where the human need is greatest, the United Nations is admirably serving its purposes. In addition, the techniques and processes made available by the agencies of the United Nations have helped provide our citizens with security and basic public services.

On the other hand, the preservation of cultural diversity, and probably the preservation of environmental diversity, will require the direct commitment of nations and individuals. In an era of national consciousness, most matters of public policy, even those with international consequences, are going to be worked out at the national level - and frequently locally and individually.

Let us celebrate the diverse nationalities, and do everything in our power to nurture our peoples and enable them to lead lives that are full and contented and peaceful.

Mr. GASSYMOV (Azerbaijan) (interpretation from Russian): Anyone who has spoken from this rostrum will probably understand what my feelings are at this moment: there is both a feeling of pride in my people and my country, which have now set out along the road of independent development - a right that does not come so easily - and a sense of enormous responsibility for every word I say, for my words will be addressed to the whole world. And I hope they will be heard!

All of us who have gathered here in this highly respected international forum, whatever our natural objective differences may be, have in common a single goal, that of achieving peace and security, and a single desire, to solve existing problems and prevent new ones from arising. Through our understanding that the world is interdependent in all its aspects, we have come to realize our necessary interest in overcoming difficulties, and that common interest has become the foundation of this transitional stage on the road towards the establishment of a new world order.

All of us, I think, have already got over the euphoria of expecting rapid changes that were about to take possession of a world liberated from the chains of the cold war, and we have come to understand the depth of the problems confronting a human race which has gone to the limit in its search for new paths to development. Nobody is expecting easy victories.

(Mr. Gassymov, Azerbaijan)

The situation in the world is undergoing fundamental and sometimes drastic changes. The military, political and economic confrontation between the two systems which had for a long time determined the balance of power in the world has come to an end with the collapse of one of them. What this has actually done is to destroy the foundation of international security, which had until then been intimidation and deterrence through parity of forces.

A new system of world security must be created, one oriented on the new poles of power, the new roles of the super-Powers, new threats, new ways of waging war and new types of forces. The probability of a nuclear war has been reduced almost to zero, but the element of chance has increased; there are no safeguards against the occurrence of regional wars or against the unforeseen actions of State leaders or the consequences of those actions. These are all matters of serious concern to the Azerbaijani Republic, for no State can be secure on its own.

Azerbaijan has no nuclear weapons on its soil and is not participating directly in the process of nuclear disarmament. Nevertheless, the Azerbaijani Republic is making its contribution by acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We are optimistic as a result of the implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, to which Azerbaijan, along with other European States, has become a party. However, despite the achievements and successes of the disarmament process, military expenditures are, as before, absorbing a significant portion of State budgets at a time when such funds could be directed towards economic development. Arms stockpiling is, as before, a threat to security.

One of the most important elements in military security is the openness or transparency of military programmes and activities. As a member of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), my country is participating in the development of this process.

The move towards direct cooperation in the form of wide-ranging and intensive multilateral exchanges of information on military budgets and numbers, production levels, research, development and modernization programmes and weapons deployment and delivery plans seems to be a desirable one. Such openness will create an atmosphere of trust, make it easier to predict developments in the overall security situation, bolster stability and reduce the risk of war.

During the long years of the East-West conflict it was usual for one side to arm the other's enemies. Today, when the threat of confrontation along East-West lines has gone, this so-called foreign-policy wisdom is likely to prove a significant danger to us all. Weapons proliferation is a serious challenge to international security and requires the world community to take active steps in order to ensure that it is limited and effectively controlled.

Arms shipments, which are fraught with a fundamental potential for danger, are becoming a real factor capable of producing destructive effects on the situation in so-called hot spots. I hardly need explain how much trouble Azerbaijan has been caused by the weapons, including foreign-made weapons, being supplied, within Azerbaijani territory, by Armenian forces. We must encourage restraint on the part of arms suppliers; this will, of course, entail political difficulties. Limits could be placed on exports of arms to a particular country or region.

It should be normal practice to declare arms transfers and to observe established limits, and the political complexion of the recipient must also be taken into account. The United Nations Register of conventional arms transfers will undoubtedly also play an important role in this regard.

Given the attempts by certain countries to obtain weapons covertly, I would like to emphasize the extreme importance of having access to intelligence data on weapons proliferation and of observing suspicious regions and carrying out unannounced inspections there. In addition to the direct effects, these would increase States' confidence in the weapons non-proliferation regime. I believe that it would be appropriate to make efforts to establish subregional restraint regimes; this is particularly urgent for the multiplicity of hot spots which are appearing against the background of a minimal military threat on a Europe-wide scale. Subregional restraint could include reducing military force levels in limited geographically remote areas. Thereafter such regimes could lay the groundwork for the demilitarization of whole regions. Azerbaijan has already proposed this concept for the Transcaucasian region.

The vacuum left by the disappearance of the Soviet Union from the military and political map of the world threatened to bring global disaster. However, we have survived that difficult period. In its death throes, the Soviet Union fortunately disintegrated; new sovereign States arose from its ruins and declared for all to hear that they were determined to join the community of democratic States based on law and with market economies. The United States of America and Russia, the two super-Powers, as they are still being called, have started to cooperate in the name of their common interests.

World developments of the last few years do indeed show that the democratic sphere is expanding. More and more countries want to be democratic, and regimes of other kinds are facing more and more difficulties. Of course, the development of democracy is a very difficult process whose ultimate goal, the establishment of an ideal system, is difficult to achieve; however, we can and must move forward towards that goal, by consolidating democratic values and institutions. And the core of the issue here is not merely adherence to ideals but the political and socio-economic rightness of the democratic system, whose effectiveness will very soon, I hope, become apparent in my country as well.

There is in science a principle called dynamic evolutionary stability, according to which the elements of a system obey the same laws and move in the same direction. Any member of the system which tries to move in a direction different from the general trend is thrown out. And so it is in life. One cannot enter the world system and then follow a different programme and not observe the same rules as everybody else. Of course, the euphoria of national independence may prompt its own "special" path, but we know from history how such experiments end.

What is the substance of the Azerbaijani Republic's national independence? Today new people have taken the helm, people free of the dogmas of the communist past, prepared to see the world as it is, without ideological masks, and striving for cooperation on the basis of common human values. These people have inherited the burdensome legacy of a repressive State which governed an obedient society, but that has only made their resolve to overcome it that much stronger. Our need for capable authorities which would see as their principal purpose the creation of the conditions for stimulating

(Mr. Gassymov, Azerbaijan)

initiative and independence, which would act in the interests of the individual and would be rooted in the institution of citizenship, was forged in suffering. Our State policy is based on the interrelationship between the freedom and well-being of the individual and the security and prosperity of the State. Today the Government of the Azerbaijani Republic is facing the complex task of establishing legislative, political and socio-economic safeguards for the irreversibility of the democratic process.

Newly independent States encounter a multitude of political, economic and social problems on their way to establishing themselves. They must face the difficult task of overcoming those problems within a cruelly short time-limit set by life itself. However, even that punishing pace at which the democratic authorities chosen by the people must act is intensified by threats and challenges of a different order which undermine States that are not yet standing on their own feet. I have in mind here what are called inter-ethnic conflicts, which are more political than ethnic in nature.

There are no limits to the energy of a nation, which has become one of the driving forces of the development of mankind in the twentieth century. The explosive power of the energy of a national ego released from the fetters of many years of repression destroys the apparently unshakeable citadels of totalitarian regimes and opens up new prospects for people.

However if that same power is placed at the service of an ugly, overblown nationalistic idea, it turns a people onto the path of war and drives it to aggression and expansion against another people chosen as its victim.

An example of the first kind of national idea is the disintegration of that conglomeration of nations known as the USSR. An example of the second - and a most accurate one - is the agression of Armenia against Azerbaijan.

To any action there is an opposite reaction. An aggressor dooms himself from the outset to failure, for he arouses against himself a people's natural reaction of self-defence, a force many times greater than the irrational force of aggression. Prosperity gained at another's expense cannot be long-lasting, even if it sometimes seems so.

What is the result? Death and destruction, masses of destitute people on both sides, relations between States made difficult or broken off - these are reflected many times in all spheres of human activity and threaten to escalate to new and more dangerous levels, involving other States and altering the regional or even the world balance. There is only one alternative: to end the aggression, if not voluntarily, then under the pressure of counter-force. Aggression must not go unpunished. Aggressors must be stopped.

The importance of the international community's position on this issue cannot be overestimated. A timely, principled reaction by the international organizations, first and foremost by the United Nations and CSCE, is one of the guarantees that the required result will be achieved - that the aggression will be eliminated and therefore thousands of lives saved and that the conditions for States to develop peacefully will be established. The key idea that breaches of the peace are inadmissible is based on the fact that each

State bears a high responsibility to the world community, and it presupposes a harmonization of national interests with the interests of all mankind.

No one can dispute the right of a nation to the free choice of its path of development, but there are no rights without duties, and this is also true of nations, whose freedom of choice is controlled by their interrelationships with the world, as parts of the whole. Freedom does not mean irresponsibility.

Violence of any kind, whatever its motivation or justification, is inadmissible. In our time the kind of nationalism that has nothing in common with national self-awareness has come close to being the greatest wellspring of violence. Sooner or later, that kind of nationalism finds the framework imposed on it by history constricting, and it starts to break out, violating other peoples' borders and infringing upon other peoples' interests.

Today, having emerged from an ideologically divided world, we are facing the danger of dismemberment based on nationalistic grounds which feed the politics of separatism. The fact that the legal norms governing the right of peoples to self-determination, and even the meaning of the term, have not been fully worked out, either in domestic or in international law, has opened the door to widespread speculation on the subject on pseudo-democratic grounds, which are essentially a cover for forces harbouring plans to seize territory.

We must make it clear, first of all, that the right of peoples to self-determination can be exercised solely by peaceful means; secondly, that the possessor of that right can be only a nation, not a national minority or an ethnic group; thirdly, that a people exercising its right to self-determination must not violate another people's right, its sovereignty or the integrity of its State.

Making the discussion of the foregoing more concrete by projecting these conclusions onto the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, I am compelled to say the following.

The Republic of Armenia, having set the dismemberment of the Azerbaijani State and the seizure of its territories as the goal of its State policy, initiated the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, an inseparable part of Azerbaijan, under cover of a demand for the right to self-determination for the Armenian population of that Azerbaijani region, whose borders, incidentally, have not been defined. There are no internal borders in the unitary Azerbaijani State. The region was split off administratively during the Stalin era, and it is the Armenian side that is so fervently demanding the elimination of the legacy of that time.

I think there is no need to comment on the ill-intentioned substitution of the concept of "people" for that of "national minority". The Armenian people has already exercised its historic right to self-determination within the borders of the Republic of Armenia. With regard to the Armenian national minority which lives in Azerbaijan and has autonomy, the Azerbaijani Republic has repeatedly stated its readiness to guarantee that minority's rights in accordance with international norms, while justifiably expecting the Republic of Armenia to take suitable steps in respect of the Azerbaijani community which has lived for centuries in the territory of the present-day Republic of Armenia but has had no rights whatsoever and which, alas, has now been forced out of Armenia into Azerbaijan.

The conflict, which is now a matter of concern to the world community, began with a blatant violation of the Azerbaijani Republic's sovereignty by Armenian separatists who, without holding any discussions with the Government of Azerbaijan, proclaimed their secession from the Azerbaijani Republic.

(Mr. Gassymov, Azerbaijan)

They were supported by the Republic of Armenia, whose Parliament, in 1989, issued decrees on the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia, on including the budget of Nagorno-Karabakh in the Armenian budget and on the election of deputies from Nagorno-Karabakh to the Parliament of Armenia. Those decrees have not been annulled to this day and are in violation of the norms of international law. Such political infringements by the Republic of Armenia on Azerbaijan's sovereignty have since been backed up with practical measures aimed at implementing Armenia's declared plans to annex Azerbaijani territory.

The use of force is, of course, unacceptable in settling disputes. Yet the actions of the Republic of Armenia, which initially took the form of covert aggression through the infiltration of separatists and terrorist gangs and delivering arms into Azerbaijan and which later turned into open aggression in the form of a direct armed incursion into Azerbaijan, the seizure of the city of Shusha and the Lachin district and the establishment of a land corridor joining occupied Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, have naturally prompted a response from the armed forces of the Azerbaijani Government, which has the right and the duty to defend the interests of its citizens and its State, over 10 per cent of whose territory is now under Armenian occupation.

Renouncing the use of force under these conditions could not prevent bloodshed. Inaction on the part of the Government would have provoked a movement from below, with the formation of self-defence forces whose actions would be spontaneous and therefore might have become uncontrollable. The Azerbaijani Republic, which has used military force only within its own frontiers and at a controlled level, the miminum level necessary to protect its sovereignty, has, from the very beginning of the conflict, called on the opposing side to cease hostilities and to settle existing problems at the negotiating table. It is continuing today to confirm its readiness for peaceful dialogue by taking specific measures aimed at reaching a compromise. However, Azerbaijan's efforts were met each time with silence on the part of the Republic of Armenia, which continues to make demands that are contrary to international law. One can hardly expect political leaders who rose to power on a wave of ideas of nationalism and the establishment of a Greater Armenia to abandon those positions, because it would mean their political death. But holding that line will lead to a catastrophe incomparably greater than the disappearance of the politicians from the arena.

The present leadership of the Republic of Armenia should realize that the path they have chosen is a deadly one; Armenia will never be a democratic State while it carries the burden of this conflict. Democracy cannot be built on a foundation of nationalism, on flouting laws, on bloodshed and suffering. This whole train of events gives us solid grounds for viewing Armenia's position with regard to peaceful settlement and international mediation merely as an attempt to gain time for consolidation in the Azerbaijani territories Armenia has forcibly seized, so that it can subsequently obtain agreement on a political solution from a position of fait accompli.

But there is no alternative to a peaceful settlement. Decisive steps must be taken to clear the obstacles from the road to peace. A necessary condition for this is the withdrawal of Armenian armed formations from Azerbaijan, since that would establish a real foundation for a stable cease-fire under international supervision, for the return of refugees to their homes and the normalization of life in the war-torn areas, including safeguards for the rights of the Armenian national minority living in Azerbaijan.

(Mr. Gassymov, Azerbaijan)

Despite all the complications and obstacles, the peaceful settlement process initiated by CSCE and followed up by CSCE's Minsk Group under the chairmanship of Mr. Rafaelli, for whose efforts I am sincerely grateful, both to him personally and to the Government of Italy, must achieve the desired result: an end to the aggression and the senseless bloodshed, the liberation of occupied Azerbaijani areas, the development of a peaceful dialogue between the two States and the solution of existing internal problems on a reciprocal basis. The national minorities in Armenia and Azerbaijan must become not pawns in a dispute but guarantees of each other's security and of respect for each other's interests, and, in the future, a bridge for cooperation.

I hold this optimic view because I have faith in the reasonableness of two peoples and two States that have lived side by side for centuries and whose history has earned them the right to peace, prosperity and good-neighbourly relations. I hope that the Republic of Armenia will come to realize the importance of such concepts as good neighbours, friendship and mutual assistance, which have deep roots in our region.

The concrete example of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict enables us to draw certain conclusions that are related and applicable to other regional conflicts similar in nature to the one I have mentioned. The world we live in is very fragile; thus our approach to the principles governing global coexistence, hammered out by the experience of human civilization, should be very cautious. Those principles include, first of all, the sovereignty of States, their territorial integrity and the inviolability of their borders; they also include the inadmissibility of securing one's interests at the expense of those of others. Such a course cannot bring independence, democracy or prosperity to any State. Everything in the world is interrelated.

The words spoken and the actions taken by some politicians in defence of human rights, national minorities, and nationhood can sometimes threaten the most fundamental right - the right to life. When blood is being shed, it is pointless to talk about the rights of national minorities. I have said it before and now say it again: The sovereignty of the State begins with the sovereignty of the individual. Respect for human rights is not part of a State's internal affairs but its obligation. The safeguarding of rights and fundamental freedoms is the main guarantee of a State's prosperous development. Returning to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, I must point out that our approach is based precisely on this understanding and that Armenians living in Azerbaijan are just as much citizens of this State as Azerbaijanis, Russians, Jews, Kurds, Lezghians, Talishes or Poles. But there are no rights without obligations. The State is the guarantor of individual freedom; the individual is the guarantor of the State's security.

The defence of human rights - and of the rights of national minorities as part of those rights - cannot be implemented to the detriment of State sovereignty. External influence and interference are sometimes hard to distinguish, and crossing the fine line that separates them can lead to disaster. Sometimes the non-use of external force can have great benefits. Problems of this kind have various political, social, and economic causes, and sometimes a State trying to solve the problem cannot instantly unravel the tangle of causes and effects. It is a lengthy process requiring a delicate approach in which the underlying principle must be: "Do no harm". In such circumstances a State has the right to count on the assistance and experience of the world community. Working to improve the State from within will have more effect than pressure from without.

Every State has its share of responsibility to the outside world, expressed as its duty to observe accepted norms and obligations. A question of practical interest today is that of the further elaboration in international law of the principle of sovereignty, with due regard for the increased international responsibility of States. Bringing national legislation into conformity with international law, a process which creates the necessary regimes of rights and freedoms of the individual, is of the greatest importance in this context. Such a process has already been initiated in Azerbaijan. The priority of international legal norms over national ones is enshrined in the constitutional act of State independence of 18 October 1991. To conclude this subject, I should like to point out that our common progress in that direction must emphasise the harmonization of the interests of mankind and national interests.

One of the main factors for stability in society, particularly during a transitional period, serving in a sense as a guarantee of the irreversibility of democratic reforms, is a healthy and developed economy. Unfortunately, I must state that today the economy of Azerbaijan has fallen on hard times. The legacy of the Soviet past and the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict are taking their toll.

The failure of the centralized planning system further strengthened our confidence in the viability of the market economy. The Parliament and Government of the Republic, committed to rapid reform, are working hard for the legislative and programmed introduction of economic changes that should accelerate the process of market formation and integrating Azerbaijan into the world economy on an equitable and mutually beneficial footing.

The world economy has not yet succeeded in surmounting a number of obstacles, foremost among which, to my mind, is the disproportion in economic development. It is believed that, in spite of all the problems of the world economy, whose number increased sharply with the collapse of the Soviet system, the end of the ideological confrontation between the two poles of power has given a positive impetus to the formulation of new approaches in the developed world towards the problems of developing countries.

Participation in international economic organizations and United Nations economic agencies, with the concomitant opening of a wide range of possibilities for multilateral economic cooperation, is a matter of high priority for Azerbaijan. Definite hopes for instituting economic reforms in Azerbaijan are being placed in financial assistance and consultative technical assistance that could be provided under special programmes. The United Nations, an office of which is to be opened at Baku in the near future, should play an active role in this.

However, I should like to express my regret concerning the position of certain States in whose policy the provision of assistance to young democratic States is linked to particular political objectives that are, in our view, of a subjective nature. Refusal to provide assistance may not only fail to promote the development of the reform process but also create new problems for the establishment of democracy in young States. The consequences of such ill-considered steps could be far more serious than the reasons that motivated the refusal.

The warfare initiated by the Republic of Armenia against Azerbaijan has created a social tragedy in my country. About 500,000 Azerbaijanis have been deprived of the basic necessities of life; 230,000 of them were expelled from the areas of Armenia in which they had historically resided, and the rest have become refugees as a result of Armenia's direct aggression against Azerbaijan. Our Government has encountered enormous difficulties in meeting their needs. I should like to express my hope that the United Nations will not leave Azerbaijan to deal with this disaster alone and that it will provide all possible assistance.

The ecological situation, which has been gradually deteriorating throughout the world, is becoming the greatest threat of all. Nature is calling attention to its problems with increasing urgency through new environmental disasters and tragedies. The problem of structural reform of the global economy on a basis that is environmentally sound still remains unsolved. The contribution of the United Nations in this field - demonstrated *inter alia* in the convening of the Conference on Environment and Development - deserves particular mention here. That Conference was a valuable example of collective efforts to solve humanity's problems.

My country cannot boast of a favourable ecological situation. The condition of the Caspian Sea is tragic, showing the effect of all the ills of a planned economy and of its consumption-oriented attitude towards nature. We firmly intend to make every effort to save this unique natural ecosystem, and we hope that our efforts will be supported by assistance from the world community.

The primary mechanism of world development at present is international cooperation. I believe that we can solve our problems only in that context. I am also convinced that the process of strengthening cooperation will continue to evolve. Naturally, such evolution is directly related to the growing importance and prestige of the United Nations. Our Organization has a special role in international relations, which are undergoing radical changes. The United Nations has been, is and always will be the world forum in matters of justice and law, the stronghold of the civilized norms of life and the highest authority in the settlement of international disputes. The growing effectiveness of the Organization as a factor for security, stability and cooperation illustrates that fact.

New conditions and changes in the world situation require readjustments, including structural ones. Special attention should be given to the development of structures and means for preventive diplomacy, early warning of crisis situations and the improvement of means for averting acts of aggression. The United Nations should have the capacity to protect its Member States more decisively and effectively from violations of their sovereignty, taking action up to and including enforcement measures against the aggressor. Cooperation with regional organizations on the basis of mutual support will, I believe, promote greater effectiveness of United Nations peace-keeping and peacemaking activities. United Nations structures should be brought as close as possible to the problems which the Organization intends to resolve. Everything should serve to increase the efficiency of United Nations activities as a mechanism for security and cooperation.

I am firmly convinced that the ship of the United Nations, guided by the strong hand of its captain, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a man of wisdom and decisiveness as befits a true captain, will keep to the necessary course, the only true course, and, as the flagship of the world community, carry it to the shores of peace and prosperity.

The forty-sixth session of the General Assembly was significant for the Azerbaijani Republic, when it was admitted as a Member of the United Nations. I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the President of the Assembly at its forty-sixth session, Mr. Samir Shihabi, for his contribution to our common cause and especially for his sensitivity and warmth towards the new Members of the Organization.

I hope that the current, forty-seventh session, under the presidency of Mr. Stoyan Ganev, will bring us closer to our common goals. I wish Mr. Ganev success in that position of responsibility. May every day of this session be a day of constructive solutions of our common problems. May new difficulties - which, alas, life will always throw in our way - not weaken our faith, nor discourage us on our long and thorny path. We conquer the road as we walk along it.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. MALIK (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): I should like to extend my apologies to you, Sir, and to members for speaking at this late hour.

A short while ago, the Foreign Minister of Kuwait spoke of certain elements of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), claiming that Iraq has not implemented them. I should like to refute all his charges one by one in order to put the facts before the General Assembly.

First, Iraq has fully cooperated with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations, and the League of Arab States in making available all information necessary to establish the facts with regard to the issue of missing persons that has been exploited against Iraq for political and inhuman purposes. Iraq has completely discharged its obligations under paragraphs 30 and 31 of resolution 687 (1991). We have allowed the Red Cross to visit all prisons and places of detention in order to investigate the situation with regard to the so-called missing persons, without any restrictions or hindrance. We have also published, several times, in our local newspapers lists of the names of those missing persons. I should like to mention here that the Kuwaiti authorities have presented seven contradictory lists of those missing persons, each of which gave a different number of missing persons. Any fair observer of this whole issue will easily understand that Kuwait and its allies are exploiting the issue without justification.

Secondly, the representative of Iraq has participated in the meetings of the first five sessions of the Boundary Commission during the period from May 1991 through April 1992. He did not participate in the sixth session held in July 1992 for very important and substantive reasons, among which was the fact that the Commission's decisions have consistently shown a strong political bias harmful to Iraq's interests, namely depriving Iraq of its rights, damaging its vital interests and creating a situation of instability in the region, in addition to the procedural excesses of that Commission. It is to be noted, however, that non-participation of Iraq's representative has not obstructed the Commission's work.

Thirdly, the process of restoring property has been proceeding normally with the participation of the Secretary-General's assistant, Mr. Foran, who has repeatedly commended the cooperation of the Iraqi authorities in that regard.

Fourthly, from the outset, Iraqi cooperation with the United Nations delegation in the implementation of Security Council resolutions 706 (1991) and 712 (1991) has been evident. Yet, whenever the two parties are on the verge of reaching an agreement, the representatives of Western States in the Security Council have set up obstacles and imposed unjust political conditions that threaten Iraq's sovereignty.

Fifthly, quite obviously, Iraq is cooperating with the Special Commission on the destruction of weapons of mass destruction. Ballistic missiles have been destroyed, and Mr. Ziffero, the Chairman of the investigation and inspection team that visited Iraq in July, has declared that the Iraqi nuclear programme has been brought to nought. The team responsible for destroying chemical weapons in Baghdad is currently doing the same with regard to chemical weapons.

Finally, I should like to point out that it is shameful for Kuwait and its allies to make such allegations for the sole purpose of perpetuating the inhuman siege against Iraq and the starving of its people.

Miss AL-MULLA (Kuwait): Like the regime he represents, the Iraqi representative's remarks are devoid of truth and sincerity. Deeds rather than words attest to a country's record. Let it not be misunderstood; there is no lack of public pronouncements by Iraq attesting to a continued belligerent stance towards Kuwait and the international community.

I shall take the points that the representative of Iraq made in response to the speech of my Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister this afternoon.

(Miss Al-Mulla, Kuwait)

On the question of prisoners of war and detainees, I should like to make the following points. Iraq to date refuses to accept the standard of procedure of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit prisoners of war and detainees. Visits by the ICRC to places of detention in Iraq are restricted. Norms for these visits are based on Iraqi laws and regulations, which the ICRC deems to be below the international standard set by the Committee.

As to the lists mentioned by the representative of Iraq, it is normal that Kuwait should review the list periodically. It is abnormal for a list to be submitted containing the same number as was submitted earlier. A review of the list is necessitated due to the return of prisoners of war who come through other parties or through the ICRC. That is why Kuwait is keen to update these lists periodically. Kuwait has submitted two contradictory lists at the same time.

As to the second point, concerning the demarcation of the border, Iraq chose not to participate in the work of the demarcation Commission during its session in July. Iraq is on record as saying that it would abide by Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which set up the Commission. However, Iraq has chosen not only not to participate in the work of the Commission, but to repeat its claims over all of Kuwait. Taha Yassin Ramadhan, the Vice-President of Iraq, said publicly in Jakarta, during the last Non-Aligned Movement meeting, that he reiterated Iraq's claims on Kuwait.

It is true that Kuwait's property is being returned, but the process is very slow and tedious. Iraq chooses the list that it submits to the co-ordinator for the return of property for submission. To date, Iraq refuses

(Miss Al-Mulla, Kuwait)

to take responsibility for returning any of the private property that was looted under the command and the order of officials of the Iraqi occupation force in Kuwait.

On the question of resolutions 706 (1991) and 712 (1991), perhaps I am stating no secret when I say that it is Iraq's lack of compliance with those resolutions that is prompting the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to explore other avenues to facilitate some kind of assistance to the Iraqi population itself. Other aspects are being looked into due to Iraq's refusal to abide by resolutions 706 (1991) and 712 (1991).

Iraq's record of compliance is attested to today by the decision of the Security Council to the effect that there is no reason for the Council to review the sanctions upon Iraq during the 16-day period. I think that speaks sufficiently on Iraq's record of compliance.

AGENDA ITEM 17

APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES IN SUBSIDIARY ORGANS AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

(a) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS: REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (PART I) (A/47/464)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Fifth Committee recommends in paragraph 4 of its report (A/47/464) that the General Assembly appoint Mr. Ranjit Rae as a member of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a term of office beginning on 24 September 1992 and ending on 31 December 1992.

May I take it that the Assembly appoints Mr. Ranjit Rae?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 8.15 p.m.